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THE IMPERIAL EDITION OF
THE COMPLETE WORKS OF
SHAKESPEARE

WITH ANNOTATIONS AND A
GENERAL INTRODUCTION BY
SIR SIDNEY LEE

VOLUME IX

MACBETH

KING LEAR

TIMON OF ATHENS

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

LONDON AND CALCUTTA
THE STANDARD LITERATURE CO., LTD.

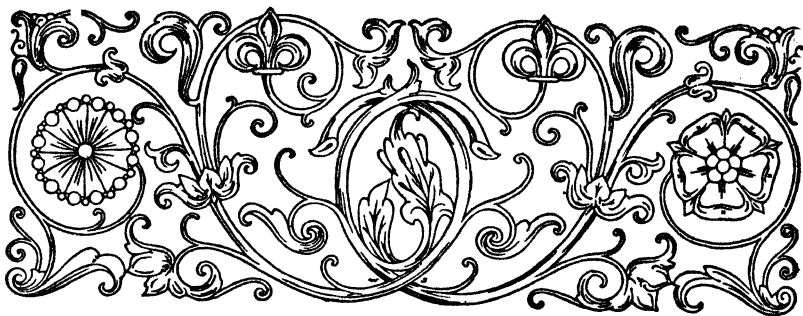
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MACBETH•

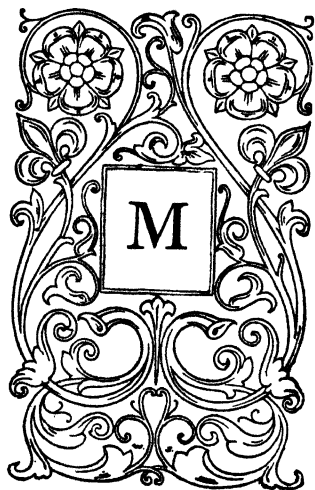
WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY HENRY CHARLES BEECHING
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY ARTHUR RACKHAM

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INTRODUCTION



MACBETH is one of the simplest of the Shakespearian tragedies in point of plot. Shakespeare has taken from the old chronicler Holinshed the story of the murder of King Duncan of Scotland by his chief captain Macbeth, only as no details are given of the manner of the murder, he has borrowed these from the earlier assassination of King Duff by his chief captain Donwald. A few sentences from Holinshed will show how little of the plot is due to the poet's invention. ✓

It folowed as Macbeth and Banquho journied towards Fores, where the king then laie, they went sporting by the waie together without other companie, passing through the woods and fields, when suddenlie in the midst of a laund, there met them three women in strange and wild apparell, resembling creatures of elder world,

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whom when they attentivelie beheld, wondering much at the sight, the first of them spake and said: All haile Makbeth thane of Glamis (for he had lately entered in to that dignitie and office by the death of his father Sinell.) The second of them said; Haile Makbeth thane of Cawder. But the third said; All haile Makbeth that heereafter shalt be king of Scotland.

Then Banquho; What manner of women (saith he) are you that seeme so little favorable unto me, whereas to my fellow heere, besides high offices, ye assigne also the kingdome, appointing forth nothing for me at all? Yes (saith the first of them) we promise greater benefits unto thee than unto him, for he shall reign indeed but with an unlucky end: neither shall he leave any issue behind him to succeed in his place, where[as] contrarily thou indeed shalt not reign at all, but of thee those shall be born which shall govern the Scottish kingdom by long order of continual descent. . . . This was reputed at the first but some vain fantastical illusion by Mackbeth and Banquho; but afterwards the common opinion was that these women were either *the weird sisters*, that is (as ye would say) the goddesses of destiny, or else some nymphs or fairies, indued with knowledge of prophesy by their necromantical science, because everything came to pass as they had spoken. For shortly after, the thane of Cawdor being condemned at Fores of treason against the king committed, his lands, livings, and offices were given of the king's liberality to Makbeth. The same night after, at supper, Banquho jested with him and said; Now Makbeth, thou hast obtained those things which the two former sisters prophesied, there remaineth only for thee to purchase that which the third said should come to pass. Whereupon Makbeth revolving the thing in his mind began even then to devise how he might attain to the kingdom; but yet he thought with himself that he must tarry a time, which should advance him thereto (by the divine providence) as it had come to pass in his former preferment. But shortly after it chanced that King Duncan, having two sons by his wife, made the elder of them called Malcolm prince of Cumberland. Mackbeth sore troubled with this,

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for that he saw by this his hope sore hindered, began to take counsel how he might usurp the kingdom. . . . The words of the three weird sisters also greatly encouraged him hereunto, but *specially his wife* lay sore upon him to attempt the thing, as she that was very ambitious, burning in unquenchable desire to bear the name of queen. At length therefore, communicating his purposed intent with his trusty friends, *among whom Banquo was the chiefest*, upon confidence of their promised aid he slew the king at Envernes in the sixth year of his reign.

The story then goes on to narrate how Macbeth, after a period of good government, began to oppress the great nobles, "for the prick of conscience, as it chanceth ever in tyrants and such as attain to any estate by unrighteous means, caused him ever to fear lest he should be served of the same cup as he had ministered to his predecessor." Then follow in order the murder of Banquo and attempted murder of Fleance, the massacre of Macduff's household, his flight to England and negotiation with Malcolm, the usurper's confidence because "a certain witch whom he had in great trust had told him that he should never be slain with man born of any woman, nor vanquished till the wood of Bernane came to the castle of Dunsinane," and finally his defeat and death.

We have therefore in Holinshed the whole outline of the story of Macbeth as Shakespeare has represented it; the only important difference being that the dramatist does not make Banquo privy to the murder of Duncan. But of course Holinshed's story is not a tragedy; tragedy is a matter of character; and Holinshed's Macbeth is so slightly characterised that he excites little interest. He

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is not even a monster of wickedness ; for Holinshed gives us to understand that, by the old laws of the realm, Macbeth was justified in resenting Malcolm's nomination as heir to the throne, since the next in blood was entitled to succeed if the direct heir were under age ; and the country had suffered so much from Duncan's incapacity that it cried out for a strong arm to put down disorders. Shakespeare has made Macbeth at once more wicked and more interesting by striking away all justification for his action, whether in Duncan's weakness or the necessities of the time, and by transferring the scene of the murder to Macbeth's own castle, in which the king is a guest : —

He's here in double trust :

First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed ; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against
The deep damnation of his taking off.

So far, however, the interest aroused in Macbeth would not differ from that which we might take in any especially cold-blooded murderer. Our feeling would be one of mere horror ; and we should be right in saying that the subject was not a fit one for dramatic treatment. It is necessary that the hero of tragedy, whatever his fatal defects, should have enough greatness and enough humanity to kindle a real admiration for his qualities and

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a real interest in his fortunes. Shakespeare supplies the grounds for these necessary feelings in two ways. First of all, he makes Macbeth a great soldier with a record behind him of valiant deeds accomplished for king and country, and a reputation for staunch loyalty to the throne when other great vassals have fallen away to the national enemy. When he first appears he is in the full enjoyment of that public applause which always greets the successful general. He is the Admiral Dewey or Lord Roberts of his day. But in the second place, Shakespeare has made him interesting by giving him a large measure of the poetic temperament, with its keen and delicate insight into circumstances and actions, and a wide sympathy with all human conditions which entirely removes him from the ranks of the merely vulgar adventurer, and by quickening his fears after the murder is accomplished, leaves him exposed to the only nemesis of which, without a conscience, he is capable. His comment upon Duncan's virtues has already been quoted. His appreciation of the consequences of the crime which comes in the earlier part of the same speech is as just as his appreciation of its character. All through the play he startles us with the vividness with which he describes or sums up a situation, as though the protagonist had usurped the function of the chorus. Thus, as he goes with the dagger towards Duncan's chamber:—

Now o'er the one half-world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings; and wither'd murder,

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Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost.

And more remarkably still, when he is pitying his own state, harassed with fears for what Banquo may attempt against him : —

Better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave ;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well ;
Treason has done his worst : nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further.

Most remarkable of all, perhaps, is his desire, even the moment after he has murdered Duncan, to join the grooms in their benediction : —

But wherefore could not I pronounce " Amen " ?
I had most need of blessing, and " Amen "
Stuck in my throat.

To this poetical sensitiveness to all human experience Shakespeare has added a double portion of the Highlander's gift of second sight, which renders it more dramatically impressive. A man who can dwell upon the horrors of the murder he is about to commit until the instrument of his guilt takes shape before his eye and who yet does not hesitate to strike the blow ; and again a man who after deliberately plotting the death

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of his best friend and comrade is haunted by his presence and yet feels no shame and regret for the deed, is beyond doubt a person whose character it is interesting to study.

Shakespeare, as he so often does, has helped us to look at the tragic hero through the dramatist's own eyes, by providing a foil which emphasises by contrast the points of character upon which the tragedy hinges.

What Laertes does for Hamlet Banquo does for Macbeth. If the one by the healthiness of his practical nature exposes the "thought-sickness" that may attack the contemplative mind, the other indicates as clearly that as a guide of life conscience is worth more than the most responsive appreciation which remains merely æsthetic. Banquo is but a blunt soldier incapable of the magnificent reflections which pour from his fellow-captain; but he has a firm grasp upon moral principle which saves him from Macbeth's fall. There have been critics who have held Macbeth to be the mere sport of supernatural powers of evil, a victim of Destiny,¹ but Shakespeare has rendered this view impossible by his treatment of the character of Banquo. To him as to Macbeth the weird sisters make promises, and we

¹ Macbeth seems inclined early in the play to take this view of himself. In I. iii., he says "Time and the hour runs through the roughest day," after he has said,

If Chance will have me king, why, Chance may crown me
Without my stir.

But in III. i. he will fight even Fate to have his own way : —
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings !
Rather than so, come, Fate, into the list,
And champion me to the utterance !

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are allowed to see that these promises are not without their suggestiveness to him, as to the other. They trouble his dreams, but in the day he brushes their suggestions aside ;—

Merciful powers
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that Nature
Gives way to in repose.

And when Macbeth, by way of sounding him on the eve of the assassination, promises him “honour” if events should turn out as the witches foretold, his reply is :—

So I lose none
In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchised and allegiance clear
I shall be counsell'd.

In Banquo, then, we have a man who is swayed and checked by a sense of honour and a sense of duty. But if all the considerations that suggest doubt and hesitation to Macbeth are examined, not one word will be found about the simple wickedness of the deed proposed. He discusses the probability of retaliation, the certainty of rousing sympathy for his victim and losing the esteem of the world, the chance of failure ; and as he passes from point to point we can see that he thoroughly realises the consequences of his lapse from virtue so that he greatly fears to run the risks. But the moral aspect of the crime as a crime does not appeal to him ; it does not occur to him to meet the first suggestion of murder with a flat “Get thee behind me,” or like Banquo

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with a prayer for aid; the problem becomes for him simply one of competing desires, desire for good name and desire for sovereignty, and at one point there is a doubt which will prove the stronger. (See I. vii. 31.)

The decision is precipitated, perhaps determined, by Lady Macbeth, who plays the part that Jezebel played in the murder of Naboth. She has the advantage over her husband that she is not imaginative and does not see many things at a time. She sees that Macbeth wants to be king, — an ambition with which she sympathises, — and further that he can easily compass the kingdom, if he will only nerve himself to seize his opportunity. His looking before and after, and his longing for men's good opinions, strike her as nothing but weaknesses. She compares him to a cat who wants to catch a fish, but hesitates from dislike of wetting his feet, — a not inapt comparison. It is noticeable as showing the influence of various motives upon Macbeth, that what she has to say in direct depreciation of his restraining impulses does not move him, until she makes the propelling impulse as vivid as the others by developing its detail; then he is won. He lives in the mood of the moment, and that changes only when a stronger casts it out: —

Lady Macbeth. When in swinish sleep
Their drenched natures lie as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell?

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Macbeth. Bring forth men-children only ;
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be received,
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber, and used their very daggers,
That they have done 't ?

Critics and actors have taken very different views of the type of woman that we are to see in Lady Macbeth. Some have imagined her as tall and imperious, a woman of masculine force of character, even something of a virago. Others have represented her almost as a siren, winning over her husband by feminine arts. And these very different types answer to two different conceptions of the part which Lady Macbeth plays in the drama. According to the first, she is a sort of devil, driving her amiable husband to abominable crimes against his will ; according to the second she is a gentle lady who has put pressure upon her womanly instincts to help her husband to attain the ambition of his life, and who in the reaction dies slowly of remorse. A reference to the play will show one or two things which must be borne in mind in estimating Lady Macbeth's character. First, there is no hint that the wife is less wicked than the husband. The "remorse" of which some critics speak is simply not in the play. All that we have in this kind is an acknowledgment that the throne has not brought happiness.

Nought 's had, all 's spent,
Where our desire is got without content :
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

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But it is likely that even this reflection is inspired, not by her own unhappiness, but by Macbeth's. It comes in the interval of waiting, when she has sent for her husband to upbraid him with his moodiness (III. ii. 4). In the second place there is no hint that she makes any effort to dissuade Macbeth from the murder of Banquo, or from the policy that issues in the massacre of the Macduffs, although the two conversations she has with Macbeth make it certain that he intends further bloodshed. She is content that Macbeth should do whatever he pleases, if only he can win the happiness she wishes for him. The sleep-walking scene shows the reaction of nature after the intolerable strain of the initial murder and all that has succeeded it; it is also a fine dramatic refutation of Lady Macbeth's practical and materialistic philosophy of life, that "what's done, is done," that a little water will suffice to cleanse from murder (II. ii. 67) and that sleep is all that is required to kill the remembrance of it (III. iv. 141); but the scene provides no evidence of remorse for the crimes. In that scene the handwashing itself, the admonitions to Macbeth, and the reflections about Banquo, are all in her old practical vein. The conclusion would seem to be that Lady Macbeth was one of those women who live in and for their husbands; that she, like him, was not sensitive to considerations of right and wrong; and that her practical disposition and strong will enabled her at a crisis to overcome his fears and scruples by showing the straight road to the accomplishment of his desires. Macbeth's imaginative nature, left to itself, might never have allowed him to

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take the first step out of the beaten pathway of honourable life (I. vii. 31-35), so that Lady Macbeth was necessary to the tragedy; and by playing a part opposed to all the traditions of womanhood she increases tenfold its horror.

The audience of the play at its first performance in 1606, if they looked for any "lesson" from it, would hardly have missed its condemnation of regicide, in view of the Gowrie conspiracy which was fresh in men's minds. In these days, at least in civilised countries, thrones are not usurped by murder; and we are more impressed by the broader human motive. If the tragedy of Macbeth is to excite in us the proper sympathy of comprehension, we must be able to see in ourselves the germs of those qualities which wrought his ruin; and as long as the mind is capable of ambition; as long as imagination can play about the objects of desire until they become necessary to our very being; as long as we have the power of taking our wishes as the guide of our conduct until we lose recognition of any other standard, and as long as power divorced from a sense of duty is certain of abuse, so long the drama of Macbeth will not fail in human interest. But the extraordinary attractiveness of the play, although it requires this ground of common human interest, is not explained by it. Nor again is it fully explained by the interest which the dramatist has aroused in us for Macbeth, because remarkable as he has made him in powers of imagination, and pitiful in defect of conscience, we can never lose sight of the fact that his ambition is, after all, of a vulgar type, and his crime one

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of the meanest acts of dastardly ingratitude. The main merit of the drama lies not in the plot, and not altogether in the characters, but largely in the superb arrangement of the scenes and in the romantic atmosphere with which the poet has suffused the whole. It is at once a triumph of stage-craft and a triumph of poetical genius.

The plot is developed in a series of short scenes, each mounting in intensity, first, up to the murder of Duncan, when the knocking at the gate comes as a much-needed relief; then up to the appearance of the murdered Banquo at the feast; then again up to the storming of Macduff's castle, and in the last act up to the final battle and death of the tyrant. In no play of Shakespeare are there so many scenes of which the interest is so thrilling, while the sleep-walking scene in the fifth act is perhaps the finest piece of invention in dramatic literature. The only scene that can be said to drag is the interview between Macduff and Malcolm, in England, which, in itself too long, is followed by an otiose passage about touching for the king's evil. The latter is sufficiently explained by the compliment implied to King James; the explanation of the former is probably that Shakespeare is here not inventing but transcribing from Holinshed. Even the dialogue, however, has possibilities for capable actors; and with the entrance of Ross it rises of itself to the high dramatic level of the rest of the play. It may be noted again how full-charged all the writing is with dramatic meaning. For example, no Shakespearian play contains such striking instances of what the Greeks called

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“irony,” — sentences which take on additional and sinister meaning in the ears of the spectators. The words which Duncan has just spoken as Macbeth enters are a famous example : —

*There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face :*
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust.

Enter MACBETH.

O worthiest cousin !
*The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me :* thou art so far before.
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
To overtake thee.

Another is Duncan's speech as he approaches Macbeth's castle : —

This castle hath a pleasant seat ; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

A third is the last message he sends to Lady Macbeth, “by the name of most kind hostess,” before he enters the chamber which is to be his grave. And then again, how subtly do all the speeches reveal character — and even less than speeches. When Macbeth starts at the witch's promise of the kingship, we know that in thought he is already a usurper, perhaps a murderer : —

Third Witch. All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter
Banquo. Good sir, why do you start ?

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Perhaps the most brilliant instance in the play of character displayed by speech is the contrast between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, when after the murder they each speak of the blood on their hands and the knocking at the castle gate : —

Macbeth.

Whence is that knocking ?

How is 't with me, when every noise appals me ?

What hands are here ? ha ! they pluck out mine eyes !

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood

Clean from my hand ? No ; this my hand will rather

The multitudinous seas incarnadine,

Making the green one red.

Re-enter LADY MACBETH.

Lady M. My hands are of your colour ; but I shame

To wear a heart so white. [*Knocking within.*] I hear a
knocking

At the south entry : retire we to our chamber :

A little water clears us of this deed :

How easy is it then !

Another piece of double characterisation, deservedly famous, is the speech in which the young Malcolm “yet unknown to woman” attempts to console Macduff for the loss of wife and children, and is answered by Macduff's four words to Ross :

Malcolm.

Be comforted :

Let's make us medicines of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief.

Macduff. He has no children.

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But of course, the triumph of self-characterisation by speech lies in the development of the character of Macbeth himself, the central stock of inhuman selfishness being gradually stript bare of those leaves of sentiment which at first disguised him from his fellows and even, perhaps, from his wife. The process is rendered more lurid by the fact, that although Macbeth studies himself with curious interest, he never sees the actual spiritual fact but only "the pity of it," as though he were the creature of malign circumstances which against his will had made him first a regicide and then a blood-thirsty tyrant.

Hear him immediately after he has murdered his aged sovereign : —

Methought I heard a voice cry "Sleep no more !
Macbeth does murder sleep," the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast, —
Still it cried "Sleep no more !" to all the house :
*"Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more ; Macbeth shall sleep no more."*

Hear him when he is about to murder Banquo : —

Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind ;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd ;

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Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
Only for them, and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man,
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings !
Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
And champion me to the utterance !

Hear him when he is plotting to murder Macduff :

For mine own good
All causes shall give way : I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.

And so it is still, when the end approaches : —

I have lived long enough : my way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf,
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have ; but, in their stead
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.

Lastly, we may take note of the atmosphere of horror which pervades certain of the scenes in which Macbeth takes part ; a horror which Shakespeare seems able to conjure up by a word. The witch scenes have had great praise, and they deserve it. From the “witches” and the “weird sisters” in Holinshed, Shakespeare has created ideal suggesters of wickedness, drawing their visible attributes from the one and their prophetic vision from the other ; their relations with Macbeth being endowed with all the dignity of that solemn and famil-

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iar scene between the witch of Endor and the unhappy King of Israel.¹ But it is to be noticed that Macbeth's presence is always necessary before the horror of the scene can be felt. He is, as it were, the interpreter of their spirit, the conductor of their wicked influence. It is with his opening words in Act I. scene iii., "So foul and fair a day I have not seen," that the miasma seems to rise; so is it again in Act IV. scene i.; we are undisturbed by the chantings round the cauldron, till Macbeth utters his conjuration: —

I conjure you, by that which you profess,
Howe'er you come to know it, answer me :
Though you untie the winds and let them fight
Against the churches ; though the yesty waves
Confound and swallow navigation up ;
Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown down ;
Though castles topple on their warders' heads ;
Though palaces and pyramids do slope
Their heads to their foundations ; though the treasure
Of nature's germins tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken ; answer me
To what I ask you.

And this atmosphere of horror is not confined to the witch scenes ; the necessary murderous gloom for the despatch of Banquo seems to be begotten as though by an evil incantation, as Macbeth looks out into the night :

¹ I agree with those critics, notably Professor Herford, who regard the scenes with Hecate (III. v., IV. i. 39-43, 125-132) as interpolated for the sake of introducing the songs.

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Ere the bat hath flown
His cloister'd flight; ere to black Hecate's summons
The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hum
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.

.
*Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood:
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.*

Other scenes which might call for particular praise in respect of their atmosphere are the opening of the second of the second act, where the succession of short, quick sentences, gives the impression of tense expectancy and excitement; the opening of the sixth scene of the first act which has all the beauty of a "quiet-coloured end of evening" in summer; and the short scene, the "west yet glimmering with some streaks of day," in which we hear the hoofs of horses, then a call for a light, and a torch enters, to be at once struck out. But where all is so finely wrought, it is a work of supererogation to praise details.

HENRY CHARLES BEECHING.

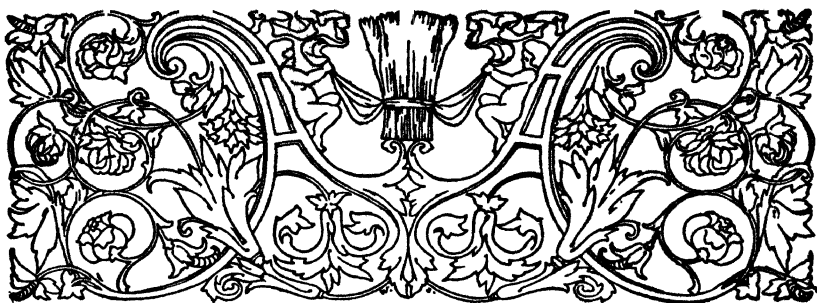
MACBETH

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ¹

DUNCAN, king of Scotland.
 MALCOLM, }
 DONALBAIN, } his sons.
 MACBETH, }
 BANQUO, } generals of the King's army.
 MACDUFF, }
 LENNOX, }
 ROSS, } noblemen of Scotland.
 MENTEITH, }
 ANGUS, }
 CAITHNESS, }
 FLEANCE, son to Banquo.
 SIWARD, earl of Northumberland, general of the English forces.
 Young SIWARD, his son.
 SEYTON, an officer attending on Macbeth.
 Boy, son to Macduff.
 An English Doctor.
 A Scotch Doctor.
 A Sergeant.
 A Porter.
 An Old Man.
 Lady M. MACBETH.
 Lady M. MACDUFF.
 Gentlewoman attending on Lady Macbeth.
 HECATE.
 Three Witches.
 Apparitions.
 Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers, Attendants, and Messengers.

SCENE: *Scotland; England*

¹ This play was printed for the first time in the First Folio of 1623, where it was divided into Acts and Scenes. A list of the "dramatis personæ" was first supplied by Rowe, together with an indication of the "Scene."



ACT FIRST — SCENE. I

A DESERT PLACE

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches

FIRST WITCH



HEN SHALL WE THREE
meet again

In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

SEC. WITCH. When the hurly-
burly's done,

When the battle's lost and won.

THIRD WITCH. That will be
ere the set of sun.

FIRST WITCH. Where the
place?

SEC. WITCH. Upon the heath.

THIRD WITCH. There to meet
with Macbeth.

FIRST WITCH. I come, Graymalkin.

ALL. Paddock calls: — anon!

1-2 *When shall . . . in rain?*] The punctuation is Hanmer's. The Folios duplicate the mark of interrogation, putting it at the end of each line.

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ACT I

Fair is foul, and foul is fair.
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II—A CAMP NEAR FORRES

Alarum within. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, with Attendants, meeting a bleeding Sergeant

DUN. What bloody man is that? He can report,
As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
The newest state.

MAL. This is the sergeant

3 *hurlyburly*] turmoil or din (of battle); an onomatopœic word.

8-9 *Graymalkin . . . Paddock*] Graymalkin is a popular expression for gray cat, "malkin" being a colloquial diminutive of Mary; "paddock" is a common word for "toad." The spirits who were attendant on witches were usually reckoned to assume forms of cats or toads.

10 *Fair is foul . . . fair*] The witches thus confess to a completely inverted moral sense.

SCENE II (stage direction) *a bleeding Sergeant*] The Folios read *a bleeding Capitaine*, and through the scene head his speeches with the word *Cap.*, an abbreviation of "captain." In line 3 the character is called "the sergeant," and the Cambridge editors have altered his title throughout to that rank. According to Holinshed, *a sergeant at arms* was sent by King Duncan to arrest the rebels noticed in this scene, and was slain by them. The dramatist adapted the episode without adhering to the chronicler's details.

1 *What bloody man is that?*] The language in this scene is so stilted and crude as to make it unlikely that Shakespeare was author of it. It is probably an interpolation by some pedestrian pen.

3 *The newest state*] The latest condition of affairs.
the sergeant] This is the "bleeding captain" of the opening Folio stage direction. See note, *supra*.

Who like a good and hardy soldier fought
 'Gainst my captivity. Hail, brave friend!
 Say to the king the knowledge of the broil
 As thou didst leave it.

SER.

Doubtful it stood;

As two spent swimmers, that do cling together
 And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald —
 Worthy to be a rebel, for to that 10
 The multiplying villanies of nature
 Do swarm upon him — from the western isles
 Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;
 And fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,
 Show'd like a rebel's whore: but all 's too weak:
 For brave Macbeth — well he deserves that name —
 Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel,
 Which smoked with bloody execution,
 Like valour's minion carved out his passage
 Till he faced the slave; 20

6 *the broil*] the battle. Cf. *Othello*, I, iii, 87: "feats of *broil* and battle."

9 *choke their art*] render useless their skill as swimmers. "Choke" often meant "suffocate by drowning."

10 *to that*] to that end.

13 *Of kerns and gallowglasses*] With Irish mercenaries; "kerns" are light-armed, and "gallowglasses" heavy-armed Irish soldiers. Cf. line 30, *infra*; "skipping *kerns*."

14 *damned quarrel*] Hanmer's correction of the Folio reading *damned quarry*, i. e., doomed or destined prey. Holinshed uses in his description of the incident the words "rebellious quarrel." "Quarrel" has in the context the common significance of cause or occasion of quarrel.

15 *Show'd*] Beguiled.

19 *minion*] beloved favourite.

MACBETH

ACT I

Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps,
And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

DUN. O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!

SER. As whence the sun 'gins his reflection
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,
So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come
Discomfort swells. Mark, king of Scotland, mark:
No sooner justice had, with valour arm'd,
Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their heels, 30
But the Norweyan lord, surveying vantage,
With furbish'd arms and new supplies of men,
Began a fresh assault.

DUN. Dismay'd not this
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

SER. Yes;
As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.

21 *Which*] Who; the antecedent is Macbeth.

ne'er shook hands] never took leave.

22 *unseam'd him . . . chaps*] ripped him up from the navel to the jaws.

"Nave" for "navel" is not found elsewhere.

24 *cousin*] Both Macbeth and Duncan were grandsons of King Malcolm and thereby cousins of the first degree.

25-28 *As whence . . . swells*] The general sense is: "in the same way that from the region of the sky where the dawn first appears come forth storms and tempests of thunder, so from that mild season of spring which promises benignity issues a flood of desolation." In other words Macbeth's victory which seems to ensure peace is straightway followed by the alarm of the Norwegian invasion.

26 *thunders break*] Thus Pope. The First Folio reads *thunders* alone. The other Folios read *thunders breaking*.

31 *surveying vantage*] detecting his opportunity.

If I say sooth, I must report they were
 As cannons overcharged with double cracks;
 So they
 Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:
 Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds, 40
 Or memorize another Golgotha,
 I cannot tell —

But I am faint; my gashes cry for help.

DUN. So well thy words become thee as thy wounds;
 They smack of honour both. Go get him surgeons.

[*Exit Sergeant, attended.*]

Who comes here?

Enter Ross

MAL. The worthy thane of Ross.

LEN. What a haste looks through his eyes! So
 should he look
 That seems to speak things strange.

37 *overcharged . . . cracks*] loaded up with double charges.

38 *So they*] Thus Steevens. The Folios make these words begin the next line, to the injury of the metre. The substitution there of *So they* for *doubly* is the best emendation proposed.

41 *memorize another Golgotha*] make a second Golgotha as memorable as the first.

46 (stage direction) *Enter Ross*] Thus Capell. The Folios read *Enter Rosse and Angus*. But nothing is known of "Angus" in this scene. *thane*] an Anglo-Saxon word meaning literally "king's servant," of a rank below an earl. Shakespeare uses the word loosely as equivalent to earl.

48 *seems to speak*] threatens or promises to speak. Cf. I, v, 26-27, *infra* : "metaphysical aid doth *seem* To have thee crown'd."

MACBETH

ACT I

ROSS. God save the king!

DUN. Whence camest thou, worthy thane?

ROSS. From Fife, great king;

Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky 50

And fan our people cold.

Norway himself, with terrible numbers,

Assisted by that most disloyal traitor

The thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict;

Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proof,

Confronted him with self-comparisons,

Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm,

Curbing his lavish spirit: and, to conclude,

The victory fell on us.

DUN. Great happiness!

ROSS. That now 60

Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition;

50-51 *the Norweyan . . . cold*] the Norwegians being defeated, their banners flap idly in the wind, and instead of threatening defiance, serve to cool the martial heat of the conquerors.

52 *Norway*] The King of Norway.

55 *Bellona's bridegroom*] Macbeth is likened to the husband of the Roman goddess of war. The phrase reads like a hazy reminiscence of Virgil's *Æneid*, VII, 319: "Et Bellona manet te pronuba." Cf. Massinger's *Bondman*, I, i, 13-14: "I'd court *Bellona* in her horrid trim As if she were a mistress."

lapp'd in proof] cased in seasoned armour.

56 *Confronted . . . self-comparisons*] Met the King of Norway on a complete equality.

57 *Point . . . arm*] The punctuation is Theobald's. The Folios put a comma after the second *point* and omit it after *rebellious*. "Rebellious" in any case implies violent resistance.

58 *lavish spirit*] prodigal courage.

61 *composition*] terms of peace.

Nor would we deign him burial of his men
Till he disbursed, at Saint Colme's inch,
Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

DUN. No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive
Our bosom interest: go pronounce his present death,
And with his former title greet Macbeth.

ROSS. I'll see it done.

DUN. What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won. 69

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III — A HEATH

Thunder. Enter the three Witches

FIRST WITCH. Where hast thou been, sister?

SEC. WITCH. Killing swine.

THIRD WITCH. Sister, where thou?

FIRST WITCH. A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her
lap,

And mounch'd, and mounch'd, and mounch'd. "Give
me," quoth I:

"Aroint thee, witch!" the rump-fed ronyon cries.

63 *Saint Colme's inch*] A small island now called Inchcolm, lying in
the Firth of Edinburgh off the coast of Fife. Saint Colme is Saint Co-
lumba, who at one time lived on the island.

64 *dollars*] an Anglicised version of the German "thalers." The use of
the word is boldly anachronistic.

66 *Our bosom interest*] Our intimate confidence.

5 *mounch'd*] a dialect form of "munched."

6 *Aroint thee*] Begone! The expression is still met with in provincial
dialects. Cf. *Lear*, III, iv, 122: "*aroint thee, witch! aroint thee!*"

rump-fed] pampered (*i. e.*, fed on the best meats).

ronyon] a scabby or scrofulous person; from the French "rogneux."

MACBETH

ACT I

Her husband 's to Aleppo gone, master o' the Tiger:
But in a sieve I 'll thither sail,
And, like a rat without a tail,
I 'll do, I 'll do, and I 'll do.

10

SEC. WITCH. I 'll give thee a wind.

FIRST WITCH. Thou 'rt kind.

THIRD WITCH. And I another.

FIRST WITCH. I myself have all the other;

And the very pòrts they blow,

All the quarters that they know

I' the shipman's card.

I will drain him dry as hay:

Sleep shall neither night nor day

Hang upon his pent-house lid;

He shall live a man forbid:

Weary se'nights nine times nine

20

7 *Her husband . . . Tiger*] Apparently an allusion to the famous voyage in 1583 of Ralph Fitch, a London merchant, in a ship called "The Tiger," who travelled from Tripolis to Aleppo by caravan. Cf. Hakluyt's *Voyages*, vol. II, pp. 247 seq.

8-9 *But in a sieve . . . without a tail*] Witches were commonly believed to be able to travel by sea in sieves, eggshells, cockleshells, and the like, and also to assume the shape of any animal *minus* its tail.

10 *I 'll do*] I 'll gnaw like a rat through the ship's hull.

15 *the very ports they blow*] the exact places they blow either on or from.

17 *the shipman's card*] the circular card indicating the thirty-two points of the compass.

18 *draw him dry as hay*] draw out all the moisture.

20 *his pent-house lid*] his eyelid. The "pent-house" was the hanging or projecting roof over the ground-floor of a house.

21 *forbid*] under a curse or ban.

22 *se'nights*] weeks.

Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine:
 Though his bark cannot be lost,
 Yet it shall be tempest-tost.
 Look what I have.

SEC. WITCH. Show me, show me.

FIRST WITCH. Here I have a pilot's thumb,
 Wreck'd as homeward he did come. [Drum within.

THIRD WITCH. A drum, a drum! 30
 Macbeth doth come.

ALL. The weird sisters, hand in hand,
 Posters of the sea and land,
 Thus do go about, about:
 Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
 And thrice again, to make up nine.
 Peace! the charm's wound up.

Enter MACBETH and BANQUO

MACB. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BAN. How far is 't call'd to Forres? What are these 40
 So wither'd, and so wild in their attire,
 That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
 And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught

32 *weird*] fateful; Theobald's correction of the Folio reading *weyward*.
 Cf. III, i, 2, *infra*.

33 *Posters*] Rapid travellers.

35-36 *Thrice . . . nine*] The witches dance round in a ring nine times,
 three rounds for each witch. Multiples of odd numbers were always
 prominent in witches' incantations. Cf. IV, i, 2, *infra*.

38 *So foul and fair a day*] Storm and sunshine are succeeding each other
 quickly. Cf. the witches' cry, I, i, 10, *supra*: "Fair is foul, and foul
 is fair." The words ironically suggest the crisis of Macbeth's fate.

MACBETH

ACT I

That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

MACB. Speak, if you can: what are you?

FIRST WITCH. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane
of Glamis!

SEC. WITCH. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane
of Cawdor!

THIRD WITCH. All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king
hereafter! 50

BAN. Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? I' the name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal: to me you speak not:
If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear 60
Your favours nor your hate.

FIRST WITCH. Hail!

SEC. WITCH. Hail!

THIRD WITCH. Hail!

43 *question*] converse with.

46 *your beards*] witches were invariably so distinguished.

53 *fantastical*] creatures of fancy or imagination. Cf. line 139, *infra*.

56 *having*] possessions or fortune.

FIRST WITCH. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

SEC. WITCH. Not so happy, yet much happier.

THIRD WITCH. Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none:

So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

FIRST WITCH. Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

MACB. Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more: 70
By Sinel's death I know I am thane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor? the thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman; and to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
You owe this strange intelligence? or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting? Speak, I charge you.

[*Witches vanish.*]

BAN. The earth hath bubbles as the water has,
And these are of them: whither are they vanish'd? 80

MACB. Into the air, and what seem'd corporal melted
As breath into the wind. Would they had stay'd!

BAN. Were such things here as we do speak about?
Or have we eaten on the insane root
That takes the reason prisoner?

71 *Sinel's death*] Holinshed describes Macbeth as the son of Sinel, thane of Glamis. But the early Scottish chronicles give the name as "Finel," or "Finleg" (or Finlay).

72 *But how . . . Cawdor lives*] Macbeth, in Scene ii, 55 *seq.*, *supra*, is said to have just conquered the rebellious thane of Cawdor in fight. The discrepancy supports the inference that the former scene is largely an interpolation.

81 *corporal*] Shakespeare invariably uses this form for "corporeal."

84 *the insane root*] the root that produces insanity, an effect commonly

MACBETH

ACT I

MACB. Your children shall be kings.

BAN. You shall be king.

MACB. And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?

BAN. To the selfsame tune and words. Who's here?

Enter ROSS and ANGUS

ROSS. The king hath happily received, Macbeth,
The news of thy success: and when he reads 90
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend
Which should be thine or his: silenced with that,
In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,
He finds thee in the stout Norwegian ranks,
Nothing afraid of what thyself didst make,
Strange images of death. As thick as hail
Came post with post, and every one did bear

ascribed to eating hemlock or henbane. Plutarch, in his *Life of Antony*, notes how Roman soldiers in the Parthian war were driven "to taste of rootes that . . . made them out of their wits."

92-93 *His wonders . . . silenced with that*] The king's sense of astonishment at Macbeth's achievements hampers a full expression of his sense of approbation. He cannot decide whether to bestow on himself or on Macbeth the greater share of congratulation. He is therefore driven to be silent on the subject. Cf. I, iv, 16-21, *infra*.

96 *Nothing afraid . . . make*] Nothing afraid of the ruin you were inflicting on the enemy. "Afeard" was not a vulgarism in Shakespeare's day.

97-98 *As thick . . . with post*] Rowe's emendation of the Folio reading *As thick as tale Can post with post*, which has been interpreted to mean that messengers travelled with news as quickly as they could be counted. But "thick as hail" is a very common phrase for rapid action or movement.

Thy praises in his kingdom's great defence,
And pour'd them down before him.

ANG. We are sent 100
To give thee, from our royal master, thanks;
Only to herald thee into his sight,
Not pay thee.

ROSS. And for an earnest of a greater honour,
He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor:
In which addition, hail, most worthy thane!
For it is thine.

BAN. What, can the devil speak true?

MACB. The thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress
me
In borrow'd robes?

ANG. Who was the thane lives yet,
But under heavy judgement bears that life 110
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined
With those of Norway, or did line the rebel
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both
He labour'd in his country's wreck, I know not;
But treasons capital, confess'd and proved,
Have overthrown him.

MACB. [*Aside*] Glamis, and thane of Cawdor:
The greatest is behind. — Thanks for your pains. —
Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them?

BAN. That, trusted home, 120

106 *addition*] title, fresh mark of distinction.

112 *line*] strengthen, reinforce.

120 *trusted home*] thoroughly relied on, pushed to the utmost.

MACBETH

ACT I

Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
 Besides the thane of Cawdor. But 't is strange:
 And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
 The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
 Win us with honest trifles, to betray 's
 In deepest consequence.
 Cousins, a word, I pray you.

MACB. [Aside] Two truths are told,
 As happy prologues to the swelling act
 Of the imperial theme. — I thank you, gentlemen. —
 [Aside] This supernatural soliciting 130
 Cannot be ill; cannot be good: if ill,
 Why hath it given me earnest of success,
 Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor:
 If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
 Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
 And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
 Against the use of nature? Present fears
 Are less than horrible imaginings:
 My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
 Shakes so my single state of man that function 140

121 *enkindle you*] encourage or incite you.

130 *soliciting*] suggestion.

134 *suggestion*] temptation.

135 *unfix*] uplift, change from the normal arrangement.

137 *fears*] objects or causes of fear.

139 *fantastical*] fruit of the fancy or imagination. Cf. line 53, *supra*.

140-142 *Shakes so . . . what is not*] Shakes so my individuality (*i. e.*, the kingdom of my individual being) that my active faculties are crushed by speculation as to the future and nothing comes home to my perception but what belongs to an imaginary future.

Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not.

BAN. Look, how our partner 's rapt.

MACB. [*Aside*] If chance will have me king, why,
chance may crown me,

Without my stir.

BAN. New honours come upon him,
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould
But with the aid of use.

MACB. [*Aside*] Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

BAN. Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

MACB. Give me your favour: my dull brain was
wrought

With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains 150
Are register'd where every day I turn
The leaf to read them. Let us toward the king.
Think upon what hath chanced, and at more time,
The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.

BAN. Very gladly.

MACB. Till then, enough. Come, friends. [*Exeunt.*]

142 *rapt*] engrossed. Cf. the Latin phrase "Extra se raptus."

147 *Time and the hour . . . day*] A proverbial phrase, also found in the Italian, meaning "Time and the opportunity will overcome all obstacles."

149 *your favour*] your pardon, indulgence.

149-150 *wrought With things forgotten*] exercised by trying to recall forgotten things.

151-152 *Are register'd . . . read them*] Are recorded on my heart's tablets.

MACBETH

ACT I

SCENE IV — FORRES

THE PALACE

Flourish. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX,
and Attendants

DUN. Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not
Those in commission yet return'd?

MAL. My liege,
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
With one that saw him die, who did report
That very frankly he confess'd his treasons,
Implored your highness' pardon and set forth
A deep repentance: nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it; he died
As one that had been studied in his death,
To throw away the dearest thing he owed
As 't were a careless trifle. .

10

DUN. There 's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face:
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust.

Enter MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSS, and ANGUS

O worthiest cousin!
The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me: thou art so far before,

2 *Those in commission*] Those intrusted with the duty.

9 *studied in his death*] instructed in the art of dying.

11 *careless*] unworthy of care, worthless.

That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved,
That the proportion both of thanks and payment
Might have been mine! only I have left to say, 20
More is thy due than more than all can pay.

MACB. The service and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itself. Your highness' part
Is to receive our duties: and our duties
Are to your throne and state children and servants;
Which do but what they should, by doing every thing
Safe toward your love and honour.

DUN. Welcome hither:
I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
To make thee full of growing. Noble Banquo,
That hast no less deserved, nor must be known 30
No less to have done so: let me infold thee
And hold thee to my heart.

BAN. There if I grow,
The harvest is your own.

DUN. My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves
In drops of sorrow. Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
And you whose places are the nearest, know,
We will establish our estate upon
Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
The Prince of Cumberland: which honour must
Not unaccompanied invest him only, 40

19 *the proportion*] the due amount.

27 *Safe toward*] Certain to promote.

34 *Wanton in fulness*] Of uncurbed luxuriance.

But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers. From hence to Inverness,
And bind us further to you.

MACB. The rest is labour, which is not used for you:
I'll be myself the harbinger, and make joyful
The hearing of my wife with your approach;
So humbly take my leave.

DUN. My worthy Cawdor!

MACB. [*Aside*] The Prince of Cumberland! that is a
step

On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;
Let not light see my black and deep desires:
The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see. [*Exit.*]

DUN. True, worthy Banquo; he is full so valiant,
And in his commendations I am fed;
It is a banquet to me. Let's after him,
Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome:
It is a peerless kinsman. [*Flourish. Exeunt.*]

45 *harbinger*] an officer of the royal household, who went in advance to arrange for the king's lodgings on his journeys.

50 *Stars, hide your fires*] This scene takes place by day; but Macbeth appeals to the stars because his project of crime is too black to be perpetrated by day. Duncan has just mentioned "stars" at line 41, *supra*.

52 *wink at*] ignore. Shakespeare uses "wink" in the sense of closing fast the eye.

54 *True, worthy Banquo; . . . valiant*] Duncan and Banquo seem to have been conferring apart as to Macbeth's merits. Duncan now admits that Macbeth is to the full as valiant as Banquo has described him.

SCENE V — INVERNESS

MACBETH'S CASTLE

Enter LADY MACBETH, reading a letter

LADY M. "They met me in the day of success; and I have learned by the perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who all-hailed me "Thane of Cawdor;" by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with "Hail, king that shalt be!" This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell."

11

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
 What thou art promised: yet do I fear thy nature;
 It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
 To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great;
 Art not without ambition, but without
 The illness should attend it: what thou wouldst highly,
 That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
 And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou 'ldst have, great
 Glamis,

5 *missives*] bearers of missives.

17 *The illness*] the evil disposition.

19-22 *thou 'ldst have . . . undone*] The expression is obscure. Lady Macbeth fears to speak out what is in her mind. By "That which

MACBETH

ACT I

That which cries "Thus thou must do, if thou have it;
And that which rather thou dost fear to do 21
Than wishest should be undone." Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal.

Enter a Messenger

What is your tidings?

MESS. The king comes here to-night.

LADY M. Thou 'rt mad to say it:
Is not thy master with him? who, were 't so,
Would have inform'd for preparation. 30

MESS. So please you, it is true: our thane is coming:
One of my fellows had the speed of him,
Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more
Than would make up his message.

LADY M. Give him tending;
He brings great news. [Exit Messenger.]

The raven himself is hoarse

cries" Lady Macbeth seems to refer to Duncan's crown, while "that which rather thou dost fear to do" refers to the act of murder which is needed to acquire the crown. "And that which . . . undone" is an independent clause in apposition to "Thus thou must do . . . have it."

25 *the golden round*] the golden crown.

26 *metaphysical*] supernatural.

seem] promise, threaten. Cf. I, ii, 48, *supra*.

30 *inform'd*] here used intransitively without an object, as II, i, 48, *infra*.

32 *had the speed of him*] outran him.

That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
 Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
 That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
 And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
 Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood, 40
 Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
 That no compunctious visitings of nature
 Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between,
 The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
 And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
 Wherever in your sightless substances
 You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
 And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
 That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
 Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark, 50
 To cry "Hold, hold!"

38 *mortal thoughts*] fatal, destructive thoughts. Cf. III, iv, 81, *infra*,
 "mortal murders."

39 *top-full*] full to the brim.

41 *remorse*] pity, compassion.

42 *compunctious visitings of nature*] conscience-moving fits of natural
 remorse.

43-44 *nor keep peace . . . and it*] nor intervene so as to cause delay be-
 tween or keep apart the murderous design and its execution. The
 general figure is that of a peacemaker who prevents two opponents
 from coming to close quarters with one another.

45 *take my milk for gall*] substitute gall for my milk.

46 *sightless*] invisible. Cf. I, vii, 23, *infra*, and *Meas. for Meas.*, III, i, 124:
 "viewless winds" and "careless," I, iv, 11, *supra*.

47 *You wait on nature's mischief*] You abet the destructive crime of which
 human nature is capable.

48 *pall thee*] cover thyself up as with a pall or shroud.

50 *the blanket*] the thick curtain or covering.

MACBETH

ACT I

Enter MACBETH

Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
 Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
 Thy letters have transported me beyond
 This ignorant present, and I feel now
 The future in the instant.

MACB. My dearest love,
 Duncan comes here to-night.

LADY M. And when goes hence?

MACB. To-morrow, as he purposes.

LADY M. O, never
 Shall sun that morrow see!
 Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
 May read strange matters. To beguile the time, 60
 Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
 Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
 But be the serpent under 't. He that's coming
 Must be provided for: and you shall put
 This night's great business into my dispatch;
 Which shall to all our nights and days to come
 Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

52 *by the all-hail hereafter*] Lady Macbeth is referring to the expressions
 "all-hailed" and "Hail!" which figure in the letter from her husband,
 which she has just read, lines 5 and 11, *supra*.

54 *This ignorant present*] This present condition of things, which has no
 knowledge of what is to come hereafter.

55 *in the instant*] in the immediate present.

60 *strange matters*] matters to excite suspicion.

60-61 *To beguile the time, Look like the time*] In order to delude the world
 or circumstance, look like the circumstance. Assume the expression of
 countenance which befits the immediate occasion. Cf. I, vii, 81, *infra*.

MACB. We will speak further.

LADY M. Only look up, clear;
To alter favour ever is to fear:
Leave all the rest to me. [Exeunt. 70

SCENE VI — BEFORE MACBETH'S CASTLE

*Hautboys and torches. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN,
BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS, and Attendants*

DUN. This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

BAN. This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
By his loved mansionry that the heaven's breath

69 *To alter favour . . . fear*] To change countenance always gives cause
for fear or suspicion.

1 *seat*] site.

3 *our gentle senses*] our senses which are soothed by the nimble and sweet
air.

4-5 *does approve . . . mansionry*] proves or shows by his love for
residence here. "Mansionry" (*i. e.*, residence) is a rare formation.
The Folios spell the word *mansonry*, which has been interpreted as
a possible misspelling of "masonry."

4 *martlet*] the house martin, though more properly the swift; Rowe's
emendation for the Folio *Barlet*, which is unintelligible. Cf. *Merch.*
of Ven., II, ix, 28-29: "like the *martlet* Builds . . . on the outward
wall." "Temple-haunting" suggests the martin's alleged preference
for building a nest in buildings of imposing dimensions which are
peacefully situated.

MACBETH

ACT I

Smells wooingly here: no jutting, frieze,
 Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
 Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle:
 Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed
 The air is delicate.

Enter LADY MACBETH

DUN. See, see, our honour'd hostess! 10
 The love that follows us sometime is our trouble,
 Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you
 How you shall bid God 'ild us for your pains,
 And thank us for your trouble.

LADY M. All our service
 In every point twice done, and then done double,
 Were poor and single business to contend
 Against those honours deep and broad wherewith
 Your majesty loads our house: for those of old,
 And the late dignities heap'd up to them,
 We rest your hermits.

DUN. Where's the thane of Cawdor? 20
 We coursed him at the heels, and had a purpose
 To be his purveyor: but he rides well,

6 *wooingly here: no jutting, frieze*] so as to invite a stay here: no projection
 nor any under-part of the cornice.

9 *most*] Rowe's correction of Folio reading *must*.

11-12 *The love . . . as love*] The marks of affection which attend our
 progress mean that we put our hosts to much trouble, for which we are
 grateful, because we recognize the love which inspires it.

13 *God 'ild us*] God yield us, God reward or repay us.

16 *single*] simple, insignificant.

16-17 *contend Against*] vie with, match.

20 *hermits*] bedesmen, whose business it is to pray for their benefactors.

MACBETH

[*Exeunt.*]

[27]

Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
 With his surcease, success; that but this blow
 Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
 But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
 We 'ld jump the life to come. But in these cases
 We still have judgement here; that we but teach
 Bloody instructions, which being taught return
 To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice 10
 Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
 To our own lips. He 's here in double trust:
 First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
 Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
 Who should against his murderer shut the door,
 Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan

"finally concluded." The sentence means that if when the deed were done, the matter ended there, then it were well if it were done quickly.

3 *trammel up*] entangle and hold securely (as in a net so that nothing should escape).

4 *his surcease*] its completion or accomplishment. "Surcease" is usually found in the legal sense of "arrest" or "stay of a suit."

6 *shoal*] a low-lying piece of land swept by the sea. This is Theobald's emendation of the Folio reading *school*, which is an old way of spelling "shoal." *School* has been defended on the somewhat far-fetched ground that life on earth may well be likened to the state of instruction or probation preliminary to the life to come.

7 *jump*] run the risk of.

8-10 *we but teach . . . the inventor*] we give lessons in murderous crime to others, and our teaching returns to punish him who first devised it.

11 *Commends*] Offers or recommends.

ingredients] Pope's emendation of the Folio reading *ingredience*, compound mixture. Cf. IV, i, 34, *infra*.

Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
 So clear in his great office, that his virtues
 Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against
 The deep damnation of his taking-off;
 And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
 Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin horsed
 Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
 Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
 That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
 To prick the sides of my intent, but only
 Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
 And falls on the other.

20

Enter LADY MACBETH

How now! what news?

LADY M. He has almost supp'd: why have you left
 the chamber?

29

MACB. Hath he ask'd for me?

17 *faculties*] prerogatives.

18 *clear*] guileless, spotless. Cf. II, i, 28, *infra*.

22 *Striding the blast . . . horsed*] Cf. *Psalm* xviii, 10 (Prayer-book version), "He rode upon the cherubins and did fly, he came flying upon the wings of the wind." Shakespeare here uses "cherubin" correctly as a plural. Elsewhere he has "cherubins." Cf. *Cymb.*, II, iv, 88.

23 *sightless couriers of the air*] invisible winds. Cf. I, v, 46, *supra*, and note.

25 *tears shall drown the wind*] The image is from a storm of rain laying a high wind. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, IV, iv, 52: "Where are my tears? rain, to lay this wind."

27 *o'erleaps itself*] overshoots the mark.

28 *on the other*] The Folios read *on th' other*. Rowe assumed that Mac-

MACBETH

ACT I

LADY M. Know you not he has?

MACB. We will proceed no further in this business:
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

LADY M. Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour 40
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting "I dare not" wait upon "I would,"
Like the poor cat i' the adage?

MACB. Prithee, peace:

beth leaves the sentence unfinished. Other editors add the word
side. But "side" may well be left to be understood from the plural
"sides" line 26, and the full stop after "other" may be retained.

32 *bought*] gained, acquired.

34 *would be*] should be, ought to be.

35-36 *Was the hope . . . slept since?*] Cf. for this extravagant figure
K. John, IV, ii, 116-117: "O, where hath our intelligence been
drunk? Where hath it *slept?*"

37 *so green and pale*] like the appearance of a drunkard waking from
his debauch.

39 *Such . . . love*] Lady Macbeth compares her husband's love to a
mere drunken fancy.

45 *the poor cat i' the adage*] Cf. John Heywood's *Proverbs*, 1546: "The cat
would eat fish, but would not wet her feet."

MACBETH

ACT I

And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep —
 Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
 Soundly invite him — his two chamberlains
 Will I with wine and wassail so convince,
 That memory, the warder of the brain,
 Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
 A limbec only: when in swinish sleep
 Their drenched natures lie as in a death,
 What cannot you and I perform upon
 The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
 His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
 Of our great quell?

70

MACB. Bring forth men-children only;
 For thy undaunted mettle should compose
 Nothing but males. Will it not be received,
 When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
 Of his own chamber, and used their very daggers,
 That they have done 't?

LADY M. Who dares receive it other,
 As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
 Upon his death?

64 *wassail*] carousing.

convince] conquer, overpower.

66-67 *Shall be a fume . . . A limbec only*] Shall be a vapour, and the receptacle of reason shall be no more than an "alembic," *i. e.*, the tubular cap of the still, through which the vapour passes before it reaches the condensing chamber. The imagery is derived from the process of distilling strong liquor.

71 *spongy*] soaked in liquor.

72 *quell*] murder. Cf. 2 *Hen. IV*, II, i, 50: "man-queller," *i. e.*, murderer.

74 *received*] accepted, recognised.

78 *As*] Inasmuch as.

MACB. I am settled, and bend up
 Each corporal agent to this terrible feat. 80
 Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
 False face must hide what the false heart doth know.
 [Exeunt.]

-
- 79-80 *bend up . . . feat*] The metaphor is from the stringing of a bow.
 Cf. *Hen. V*, III, i, 16-17: "*bend up* every spirit To his full height."
 81 *mock the time . . . show*] Cf. I, v, 60-61, *supra*: "To beguile the time,
 Look like the time."



ACT SECOND — SCENE I — INVERNESS
COURT OF MACBETH'S CASTLE

Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE bearing a torch before him

BANQUO



OW GOES THE NIGHT,
boy?

FLE. The moon is down; I
have not heard the clock.

BAN. And she goes down at
twelve.

FLE. I take 't, 't is later, sir.

BAN. Hold, take my sword.
There 's husbandry in heaven,
Their candles are all out. Take
thee that too.

A heavy summons lies like lead
upon me,

And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose!

4 husbandry in heaven] thrift, frugality in heaven.

Enter MACBETH, and a Servant with a torch

Give me my sword.

Who 's there?

10

MACB. A friend.

BAN. What, sir, not yet at rest? The king's a-bed:
He hath been in unusual pleasure, and
Sent forth great largess to your offices:
This diamond he greets your wife withal,
By the name of most kind hostess; and shut up
In measureless content.

MACB. Being unprepared,
Our will became the servant to defect,
Which else should free have wrought.

BAN.

All 's well.

I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:
To you they have show'd some truth.

20

MACB.

I think not of them:

5 *Their*] "Heaven" is plural; a common usage. Cf. *Pericles*, I, iv, 16: "if heaven slumber, while *their* creatures want." For "candles," cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, III, v, 9: "Night's candles are burnt out."

Take thee that too] Banquo hands Fleance his dirk or dagger as well as his sword.

14 *offices*] the rooms occupied by servants in great houses. Thus the Folios. Rowe's change to *officers*, though generally adopted, is not essential.

16 *shut up*] the phrase is abrupt and elliptical. It probably means that the king has shut himself up, encased himself, or perhaps composed himself to slumber.

17-19 *Being unprepared . . . wrought*] "Our will" is the antecedent of "which." Macbeth means that the entertainment proved defective owing to want of preparation. He and his wife only had their willingness to serve the king, which, had they received adequate notice, would have expressed itself without any restriction.

Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,
We would spend it in some words upon that business,
If you would grant the time.

BAN. At your kind'st leisure.

MACB. If you shall cleave to my consent, when 't is,
It shall make honour for you.

BAN. So I lose none
In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchised and allegiance clear,
I shall be counsell'd.

MACB. Good repose the while!

BAN. Thanks, sir: the like to you!

30

[*Exeunt Banquo and Fleance.*]

MACB. Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed. [*Exit Servant.*]
Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but

22 *when we can . . . serve*] when we can prevail on an hour of your time to be at our disposal. Macbeth's courtesy is extravagantly strained. His use of the plural "we" probably implies that he is speaking for himself and his wife, as in his preceding speech.

25 *If you . . . consent, when 't is*] "Consent" often stands for a party or a group of men united by a common agreement. The line means, "If you shall adhere to my party or partisanship when the time comes for our confidential interview."

28 [*franchised*] free (from sin). Cf. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 236: "We that have free souls."

clear] guileless, spotless. Cf. I, vii, 18, *supra*.

36-37 *sensible To feeling*] capable of perception by the touch.

A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
 Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
 I see thee yet, in form as palpable 40
 As this which now I draw.
 Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;
 And such an instrument I was to use.
 Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
 Or else worth all the rest: I see thee still;
 And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
 Which was not so before. There's no such thing:
 It is the bloody business which informs
 Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world
 Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse 50
 The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
 Pale Hecate's offerings; and wither'd murder,

44-45 *Mine eyes . . . all the rest*] If the dagger be imaginary, then my eyes are proved to be fools by the other senses which show it to be unreal; if the dagger be real, then my sight, which alone presents the truth, is worth all my other senses put together.

46 *dudgeon*] handle.
gouts] drops; from the French "goutte." The word is found nowhere else in Elizabethan literature.

48 *informs*] offers information or instruction. The verb is used intransitively, as at I, v, 30, *supra*.

49 *the one half-world*] this hemisphere.

51-52 *witchcraft . . . Hecate's offerings*] witchcraft now offers sacrifice to pale Hecate, the goddess of the infernal world. Cf. Seneca's *Medea*, I, 6-7: "Tacitisque praebeis conscium sacris jubar, Hecate triformis" (triple Hecate, who givest forth rays cognisant of secret mysteries), and Ovid's *Met.*, VII, 74-75, where reference is made to an altar dedicated to Hecate, — a passage into which Golding, in his translation, interpolates the remark that of her "the witches holde as of their goddesses." "Hecate" is almost always a dissyllable in Shakespeare.

MACBETH

ACT II

Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
 Whose howl 's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
 With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
 Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
 Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
 Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,
 And take the present horror from the time,
 Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives: 60
 Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

I go, and it is done: the bell invites me. [A bell rings.
 Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
 That summons thee to heaven, or to hell. [Exit.

SCENE II — THE SAME

Enter LADY MACBETH

LADY M. That which hath made them drunk hath
 made me bold;
 What hath quench'd them hath given me fire. Hark!
 Peace!

54 *Whose howl 's his watch*] The wolf's howls, which he emits by night, are likened to the periodic cries of a night watchman or sentinel.

55 *strides*] Pope's emendation for the Folio reading *sides*. The word suggests the stealthy movement of the ravisher. In *Lucrece*, Shakespeare wrote of Tarquin "Into the chamber wickedly he *stalks*" (line 365) and after the rape "through the dark night he *stealeth*" (line 729).

56 *sure*] Pope's correction of the Folio reading *sowr* or *sowre*.

59-60 *take the present horror . . . suits with it*] and catch (like an infectious disease) from this hour the present horror which suits well with the (crime appointed for this) hour.

61 *Words . . . gives*] The singular verb with a plural subject is no uncommon construction in Elizabethan English.

It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it:
The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores: I have drugg'd their
possets,

That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.

MACB. [Within] Who 's there? what, ho!

LADY M. Alack, I am afraid they have awaked
And 't is not done: the attempt and not the deed 10
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done 't.

Enter MACBETH

My husband!

MACB. I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a
noise?

LADY M. I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?

MACB. When?

LADY M. Now.

3 *the fatal bellman*] the owl is compared to the bellman or common crier
who visits condemned persons on the eve of their execution.

5 *the surfeited grooms*] the overgorged menials. Cf. line 50, *infra*.

6 *mock their charge*] trifle with the trust reposed in them.

possets] cups of hot milk curdled with alcoholic liquors and mixed with
other ingredients, like sugar and eggs.

10-11 *the attempt . . . Confounds us*] our consternation is caused by the
mere attempt, not by the actual execution of the deed.

MACBETH

ACT II

MACB.

As I descended?

LADY M. Ay.

MACB. Hark!

Who lies i' the second chamber?

LADY M.

Donalbain.

MACB. This is a sorry sight. [*Looking on his hands.* 20

LADY M. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

MACB. There 's one did laugh in's sleep, and one
cried "Murder!"

That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:
But they did say their prayers, and address'd them
Again to sleep.

LADY M. There are two lodged together.

MACB. One cried "God bless us!" and "Amen" the
other,

As they had seen me with these hangman's hands:

Listening their fear, I could not say "Amen,"

When they did say "God bless us!"

LADY M. Consider it not so deeply.

30

MACB. But wherefore could not I pronounce
"Amen"?

I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"

Stuck in my throat.

LADY M. These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.

MACB. Methought I heard a voice cry "Sleep no
more!

27 *As they . . . hands*] As if they had seen me with these executioner's
or butcher's hands.

28 *Listening their fear*] Overhearing their expressions of fear

35 *I heard a voice cry*] The punctuation of the Folio leaves it uncertain as

Macbeth does murder sleep" — the innocent sleep,
 Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,
 The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
 Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
 Chief nourisher in life's feast, —

LADY M.

What do you mean? 40

MACB. Still it cried "Sleep no more!" to all the
 house:

"Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
 Shall sleep no more: Macbeth shall sleep no more."

LADY M. Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy
 thane,

You do unbend your noble strength, to think
 So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,
 And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
 Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
 They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
 The sleepy grooms with blood.

MACB.

I'll go no more:

50

I am afraid to think what I have done;
 Look on 't again I dare not.

to how much of the speech that follows is intended for the cry of the
 voice. Johnson was probably right in treating all the words after
murder sleep as Macbeth's comment.

37 *ravell'd sleeve*] tangled raw silk, which the weaver knits into smooth
 skeins. The Folios spell *sleeue*, but *sleeve* (*i. e.*, floss-silk) is clearly
 intended.

42-43 *Glamis . . . sleep no more*] Macbeth is warned that each ac-
 quisition of new dignity deprives him more and more effectually of
 command of sleep, which is nature's chief restorative influence.

46 *brainsickly*] crazily, madly.

50 *grooms*] menials, as in line 5, *supra*.

LADY M. Infirm of purpose!
 Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead
 Are but as pictures: 't is the eye of childhood
 That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
 I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
 For it must seem their guilt. [*Exit. Knocking within.*]

MACB. Whence is that knocking?
 How is 't with me, when every noise appals me?
 What hands are here? ha! they pluck out mine
 eyes!

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood 60
 Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will
 rather

The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
 Making the green one red.

56-57 *I'll gild . . . their guilt*] a favourite quibble of Shakespeare. Cf.
 2 *Hen. IV*, IV, v, 129, "England shall double *gild* his treble *guilt*."
 "Golden" was not infrequently employed as an epithet to blood. Cf.
 II, iii, 111, *infra*, and *K. John*, II, i, 316.

60-61 *Will all great Neptune's . . . hand?*] Close parallels for this and
 the following lines are to be found in classical poetry. Cf. Seneca's
Hippolytus, 715-718: "Quis eluet me Tanais? aut quae barbaris
 Mæotis undis Pontico incumbens mari? Non ipse toto magnus
 Oceano pater Tantum expiarit sceleris." (What Tanais shall purge
 me? or what Mæotis stretching with its sluggish waters into the
 Pontic sea? Not the great father himself of the whole expanse of
 ocean could cleanse me from so great a crime.)

62 *incarnadine*] colour with red dye.

63 *one red*] a single expanse of red. The Folios place after *one* a comma,
 which may best be omitted.

Re-enter LADY MACBETH

LADY M. My hands are of your colour, but I shame
To wear a heart so white. [*Knocking within*] I hear a
knocking

At the south entry: retire we to our chamber:

A little water clears us of this deed:

How easy is it then! Your constancy

Hath left you unattended. [*Knocking within.*] Hark! more
knocking:

Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us

70

And show us to be watchers: be not lost

So poorly in your thoughts.

MACB. To know my deed, 't were best not know
myself. [*Knocking within.*]

Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou
couldst! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III — THE SAME

Enter a Porter. Knocking within

PORTER. Here 's a knocking indeed! If a man were
porter of hell-gate, he should have old turning the key.
[*Knocking within*] Knock, knock, knock! Who 's there, i'

69 *left you unattended*] deserted you.

70 *nightgown*] robe de chambre, dressing-gown. Cf. V, i, 5, *infra*.

73 *To know . . . myself*] Rather than fully to realise what I have done, I
would prefer to lose all consciousness of my being.

2 *old turning*] any amount of turning: "old" is a colloquial intensive.
"Vecchio" is similar— used in Italian.

the name of Beelzebub? Here's a farmer, that hanged himself on th' expectation of plenty: come in time; have napkins enow about you; here you'll sweat for 't. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock! Who's there, in th' other devil's name? Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven: O, come in, equivocator. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose: come in, tailor; here you may roast your goose. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock; never at quiet! What are you? But this place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose

4-5 *a farmer . . . plenty*] many stories have been told of farmers who, having hoarded grain with a view to selling at a high price in time of an anticipated scarcity, were ruined by an unexpected plenty, and a consequent fall of price.

5 *come in time*] be in good time, hurry up.

6 *napkins*] pocket-handkerchiefs.

8 *an equivocator*] A reference is commonly detected here to the Jesuit Henry Garnett, who at his trial for complicity in the Gunpowder Plot, 28 March, 1606, boldly defended the doctrine of equivocation.

13-14 *here's an English . . . French hose*] the English tailor's offence is that of borrowing French fashions. French hose or knickerbockers were commonly of two patterns, one very full and loose and the other very tight. The speaker was probably thinking of the first kind.

15 *goose*] the tailor's flat smoothing-iron.

18-19 *the primrose way*] Cf. *Hamlet*, I, iii, 50: "the *primrose* (i. e., pleasant) *path* of dalliance"; and *All's Well*, IV, v, 48-49: "the *flowery way* that leads . . . to the great fire."

way to the everlasting bonfire. [*Knocking within.*] Anon, anon! I pray you, remember the porter. [*Opens the gate.*]

Enter MACDUFF and LENNOX

MACD. Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed,
That you do lie so late? 22

PORT. Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second cock: and drink, sir, is a great provoker of three things.

MACD. What three things does drink especially provoke?

PORT. Marry, sir, nose-painting, sleep and urine. Lechery, sir, it provokes and unprovokes; it provokes the desire, but it takes away the performance: therefore much drink may be said to be an equivocator with lechery: it makes him and it mars him; it sets him on and it takes him off; it persuades him and disheartens him; makes him stand to and not stand to; in conclusion, equivocates him in a sleep, and giving him the lie, leaves him.

MACD. I believe drink gave thee the lie last night. 35

PORT. That it did, sir, i' the very throat on me: but I requited him for his lie, and, I think, being too strong

23-24 *the second cock*] about three o'clock in the morning. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, IV, iv, 3-4: "*the second cock* hath crow'd; . . . 't is three o'clock."

34 *in a sleep*] into a sleep.

giving him the lie] a quibbling expression for "making him lie down."

MACBETH

ACT II

for him, though he took up my legs sometime, yet I made a shift to cast him.

MACD. Is thy master stirring?

40

Enter MACBETH

Our knocking has awaked him; here he comes.

LEN. Good morrow, noble sir.

MACB. Good morrow, both.

MACD. Is the king stirring, worthy thane?

MACB. Not yet.

MACD. He did command me to call timely on him: I have almost slipp'd the hour.

MACB. I'll bring you to him.

MACD. I know this is a joyful trouble to you; But yet 't is one.

MACB. The labour we delight in physics pain. This is the door.

MACD. I'll make so bold to call,
For 't is my limited service.

[*Exit.* 50]

LEN. Goes the king hence to-day?

MACB. He does: he did appoint so.

LEN. The night has been unruly: where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down, and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' the air, strange screams of death,

39 *cast*] the word is used quibblingly in the double sense of "throw" and "vomit."

46 *a joyful trouble*] Cf. I, vi, 10-14, *supra*, where Duncan speaks of the "trouble" his visit imposes on his host.

48 *physics*] relieves, neutralises.

50 *limited service*] appointed service.

And prophesying with accents terrible
 Of dire combustion and confused events
 New hatch'd to the woful time: the obscure bird
 Clamour'd the livelong night: some say, the earth
 Was feverous and did shake.

MACB. 'T was a rough night.

LEN. My young remembrance cannot parallel 60
 A fellow to it.

Re-enter MACDUFF

MACD. O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart
 Cannot conceive nor name thee.

MACB. } What's the matter?
 LEN. }

MACD. Confusion now hath made his masterpiece.
 Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
 The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
 The life o' the building.

MACB. What is't you say? the life?

56 *combustion*] tumult (without precise reference to burning). Cf.
Henry VIII, V, iv, 47: "a *combustion* in the state."

56-57 *events New hatch'd . . . time*] events in the state of being newly
 hatched to harmonise with a sorrowful state of things. Cf. *2 Hen. IV*,
 III, i, 82-86: "a man may *prophesy* . . . of things *As yet not come to*
life. . . . Such *things* become the *hatch* and brood of *time*."

57 *the obscure bird*] the clandestine, dark-haunting bird, *i. e.*, the owl.

59 *Was feverous . . . shake*] Common symptoms of an ague fit.

64 *Confusion*] Destruction, ruin: a bold personification.

66 *The Lord's anointed temple*] Two biblical expressions are confused
 here: "he is the Lord's anointed" (*1 Sam.*, xxiv, 10), and "ye are
 the *temple* of the living God" (*2 Cor.*, vi, 16).

MACBETH

ACT II

LEN. Mean you his majesty?

MACD. Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight

With a new Gorgon: do not bid me speak; 70
See, and then speak yourselves.

[*Exeunt Macbeth and Lennox.*]

Awake, awake!

Ring the alarum-bell. Murder and treason!
Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! awake!
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,
And look on death itself! up, up, and see
The great doom's image! Malcolm! Banquo!
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,
To countenance this horror. Ring the bell. [*Bell rings.*]

Enter LADY MACBETH

LADY M. What's the business,
That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley 80
The sleepers of the house? speak, speak!

MACD. O gentle lady,
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:
The repetition, in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell.

69-70 *destroy . . . Gorgon*] The head of Medusa, the Gorgon had the power of turning the spectator to stone. Cf. Ovid's *Met.*, V, 189-210.

74 *sleep, death's counterfeit*] Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, III, ii, 364: "death-counterfeiting sleep."

78 *To countenance*] To act in harmony with.

Enter BANQUO

O Banquo, Banquo!

Our royal master 's murder'd.

LADY M.

Woe, alas!

What, in our house?

BAN.

Too cruel any where.

Dear Duff, I prithee, contradict thyself,

And say it is not so.

Re-enter MACBETH and LENNOX, with ROSS

MACB. Had I but died an hour before this chance,
I had lived a blessed time; for from this instant 90
There 's nothing serious in mortality:
All is but toys: renown and grace is dead;
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of.

Enter MALCOLM and DONALBAIN

DON. What is amiss?

MACB.

You are, and do not know't:

The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood

Is stopp'd; the very source of it is stopp'd.

MACD. Your royal father 's murder'd.

MAL.

O, by whom?

89-90 *Had I but died . . . time*] Cf. *Wint. Tale*, IV, iv, 453-454: "If I might die within this hour, I have lived To die when I desire."

94 *this vault*] The world, which is vaulted by the sky, is likened to an empty wine-vault or cellar.

MACBETH

ACT II

LEN. Those of his chamber, as it seem'd, had
done't:

Their hands and faces were all badged with blood; 100
So were their daggers, which unwiped we found
Upon their pillows:
They stared, and were distracted; no man's life
Was to be trusted with them.

MACB. O, yet I do repent me of my fury,
That I did kill them.

MACD. Wherefore did you so?

MACB. Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and
furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man:
The expedition of my violent love
Outrun the pauser reason. Here lay Duncan, 110
His silver skin laced with his golden blood,
And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature
For ruin's wasteful entrance: there, the murderers,
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breech'd with gore: who could refrain,
That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make 's love known?

LADY M. Help me hence, ho!

100 *badged*] marked. Cf. *2 Hen. VI*, III, ii, 200: "murder's crimson badge."

110 *the pauser reason*] the reason which checks impulse.

111-115 *His silver skin . . . gore*] These stilted metaphors are the studied language of hypocrisy. For "golden blood" see note on II, ii, 56-57, *supra*.

115 *Unmannerly breech'd*] Untidily or foully covered with blood, as if with breeches.

MACD. Look to the lady.

MAL. [*Aside to Don.*] Why do we hold our tongues,
That most may claim this argument for ours?

DON. [*Aside to Mal.*] What should be spoken here,
where our fate, 120

Hid in an auger-hole, may rush, and seize us?

Let 's away;

Our tears are not yet brew'd.

MAL. [*Aside to Don.*] Nor our strong sorrow
Upon the foot of motion.

BAN. Look to the lady:
[*Lady Macbeth is carried out.*]

And when we have our naked frailties hid,
That suffer in exposure, let us meet,
And question this most bloody piece of work,
To know it further. Fears and scruples shake us:
In the great hand of God I stand, and thence
Against the undivulged pretence I fight 130
Of treasonous malice.

MACD. And so do I.

ALL. So all.

119 *argument*] theme.

121 *Hid in an auger-hole*] Concealed in the minutest hiding place.
"Auger-hole" means any small cranny. It is unlikely that the bore
of a pistol, as has been suggested, is intended.

124 *Upon the foot of motion*] In full activity, in active working.

125 *when we . . . hid*] when we have clothed our half-clothed bodies.
The porter had already pointed out that "this place is too cold for
hell" (line 16, *supra*).

130-131 *Against the undivulged . . . malice*] I fight against any further
design that has not yet come to light of treasonable villany.

MACBETH

ACT II

MACB. Let 's briefly put on manly readiness,
And meet i' the hall together.

ALL.

Well contented.

[*Exeunt all but Malcolm and Donalbain.*]

MAL. What will you do? Let's not consort with
them:

To show an unfelt sorrow is an office
Which the false, man does easy. I'll to England.

DON. To Ireland, I; our separated fortune
Shall keep us both the safer: where we are
There 's daggers in men's smiles: the near in blood,
The nearer bloody.

MAL. This murderous shaft that 's shot 140
Hath not yet lighted, and our safest way
Is to avoid the aim. Therefore to horse;
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,
But shift away: there 's warrant in that theft
Which steals itself when there 's no mercy left. [*Exeunt.*]

132 *manly readiness*] attire or equipment of men, soldiers' gear; the antithesis of "naked frailties" (line 125, *supra*).

139-140 *the near . . . bloody*] The closer in blood relationship, the greater the danger of shedding one's blood, of being the objects of attack. "Near" is the old form of the comparative "nearer."

140-142 *This murderous shaft . . . aim*] The end for which this murder was committed has not yet been reached. The king's sons still live, and stand in the way of any usurper's approach to the throne.

143 *dainty of leave-taking*] punctilious about saying farewell.

144 *shift away*] go off stealthily.

SCENE IV — OUTSIDE MACBETH'S CASTLE

Enter Ross with an old Man

OLD M. Threescore and ten I can remember well:
 Within the volume of which time I have seen
 Hours dreadful and things strange, but this sore night
 Hath trifled former knowings.

Ross. Ah, good father,
 Thou seest, the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
 Threaten his bloody stage: by the clock 't is day,
 And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp:
 Is 't night's predominance, or the day's shame,
 That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
 When living light should kiss it?

OLD M. 'T is unnatural, 10
 Even like the deed that 's done. On Tuesday last
 A falcon towering in her pride of place
 Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

Ross. And Duncan's horses — a thing most strange
 and certain —
 Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,

4 *Hath trifled former knowings*] Has made trifling or insignificant (by comparison) previous experiences.

7 *the travelling lamp*] the sun.

8 *the day's shame*] the day's reluctance to show itself, owing to the king's murder.

12 *towering in her pride of place*] soaring to her highest pitch.

13 *a mousing owl*] an owl whose ordinary prey was a mouse.

15 *minions*] darlings, beauties, favourite specimens.

Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make
War with mankind.

OLD M. 'T is said they eat each other.

ROSS. They did so, to the amazement of mine eyes,
That look'd upon 't.

Enter MACDUFF

Here comes the good Macduff. 20

How goes the world, sir, now?

MACD. Why, see you not?

ROSS. Is 't known who did this more than bloody
deed?

MACD. Those that Macbeth hath slain.

ROSS. Alas, the day!

What good could they pretend?

MACD. They were suborn'd:

Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons,
Are stol'n away and fled, which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.

ROSS. 'Gainst nature still:

Thriftless ambition, that wilt ravin up
Thine own life's means! Then 't is most like
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth. 30

16 *Turn'd wild in nature*] Returned to a state of savagery.

18 *'T is said . . . other*] Holinshed notes that the "horses in Lothian, being of singular beauty and swiftness, did eat their own flesh" on the occasion of the murder of Duff, King of Scotland, in 972.

24 *pretend*] intend, aim at.

28 *ravin up*] greedily devour. Cf. IV, i, 24, *infra*, and "*ravin down*," *Meas. for Meas.*, I, ii, 123.

MACD. He is already named, and gone to Scone
To be invested.

ROSS. Where is Duncan's body?

MACD. Carried to Colme-kill,
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors
And guardian of their bones.

ROSS. Will you to Scone?

MACD. No, cousin, I 'll to Fife.

ROSS. Well, I will thither.

MACD. Well, may you see things well done there:
adieu!

Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!

ROSS. Farewell, father.

OLD M. God's benison go with you, and with those 40
That would make good of bad and friends of foes!

[*Exeunt.*]

³³ *Colme-kill*] the island of Iona, the burial place of the early kings of Scotland. The word literally means the chapel or cell of St. Columba, who first preached Christianity there.

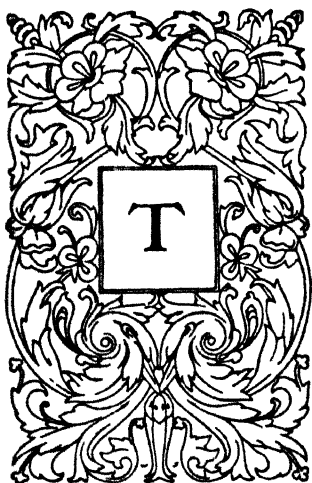


ACT THIRD — SCENE I — FORRES

THE PALACE

Enter BANQUO

BANQUO



THOU HAST IT NOW:
 King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
 As the weird women promised,
 and I fear
 Thou play'st most foully for 't:
 yet it was said
 It should not stand in thy pos-
 terity,
 But that myself should be the
 root and father
 Of many kings. If there come
 truth from them —
 As upon thee, Macbeth, their
 speeches shine —
 Why, by the verities on thee made good,
 May they not be my oracles as well
 And set me up in hope? But hush, no more.

10

2 *weird*] Theobald's emendation of the *weyard* or *weyward* of the Folios.
 Cf. I, iii, 32, *supra*; III, iv, 133, and IV, i, 136, *infra*.

SCENE I

MACBETH

Sennet sounded. Enter MACBETH, as king; LADY MACBETH, as queen; LENNOX, ROSS, Lords, Ladies, and Attendants

MACB. Here 's our chief guest.

LADY M. If he had been forgotten,
It had been as a gap in our great feast,
And all-thing unbecoming.

MACB. To-night we hold a solemn supper, sir,
And I 'll request your presence.

BAN. Let your highness
Command upon me, to the which my duties
Are with a most indissoluble tie
For ever knit.

MACB. Ride you this afternoon?

BAN. Ay, my good lord.

MACB. We should have else desired your good
advice,

20

Which still hath been both grave and prosperous,
In this day's council; but we 'll take to-morrow.
Is 't far you ride?

BAN. As far, my lord, as will fill up the time
'Twixt this and supper: go not my horse the better,

4 *stand*] stay, keep.

7 *shine*] shed conspicuous light or favour.

11 (Stage Direction) *Sennet sounded*] A set of notes sounded on a trumpet.

13 *all-thing*] altogether. Thus the First Folio. The Second Folio has
all-things and the Third and Fourth *all things*.

14 *solemn*] formal, ceremonial.

21 *grave and prosperous*] weighty and auspicious, *i. e.*, tending to a prosperous issue.

22 *take*] appoint.

25 *go not my horse the better*] if my horse go not sufficiently well. The com-

MACBETH

ACT III

I must become a borrower of the night
For a dark hour or twain.

MACB. Fail not our feast.

BAN. My lord, I will not.

MACB. We hear our bloody cousins are bestow'd
In England and in Ireland, not confessing 30
Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers
With strange invention: but of that to-morrow,
When therewithal we shall have cause of state
Craving us jointly. Hie you to horse: adieu,
Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with you?

BAN. Ay, my good lord: our time does call upon 's.

MACB. I wish your horses swift and sure of foot,
And so I do commend you to their backs.
Farewell. [Exit Banquo.]

Let every man be master of his time 40
Till seven at night; to make society
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
Till supper-time alone: while then, God be with you!

[Exeunt all but Macbeth and an Attendant.]

Sirrah, a word with you: attend those men
Our pleasure?

ATTEND. They are, my lord, without the palace-
gate.

parative "the better" has here a positive significance of "up to the mark." Cf. *Lear*, IV, iii, 18-19: "her smiles and tears Were like a better way."

33 *cause of state*] political business.

43 *while then*] till then. The metre of the line is irregular. The common greeting, "God be with you," i. e., good-bye, was doubtless slurred in pronunciation.

MACB. Bring them before us. [Exit Attendant.]

To be thus is nothing;

But to be safely thus: 'our fears in Banquo

Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature

Reigns that which would be fear'd: 't is much he
dares,

50

And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,

He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour

To act in safety. There is none but he

Whose being I do fear: and under him

My Genius is rebuked, as it is said

Mark Antony's was by Cæsar. He chid the sisters,

When first they put the name of king upon me,

And bade them speak to him; then prophet-like

They hail'd him father to a line of kings:

Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown

60

And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,

Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,

No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,

For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind; .

48 *But to be safely thus*] But to reign in safety is the essential thing.

49 *royalty of nature*] high nobility of character.

51 *to that*] in addition to that.

53 *in safety*] cautiously.

55-56 *My Genius . . . Cæsar*] In *Ant. and Cleop.*, II, iii, 18-23, Shakespeare, adapting a passage in Plutarch's *Life of Mark Antony*, makes a soothsayer warn Antony that his demon, *i. e.*, genius or attendant spirit, is overpowered or checked when in the presence of Octavius Cæsar.

62 *wrench'd with*] wrenched by.

64 *filed*] defiled.

For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;
 Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
 Only for them, and mine eternal jewel
 Given to the common enemy of man,
 To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!
 Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
 And champion me to the utterance! Who 's there?

70

Re-enter Attendant, with two Murderers

Now go to the door, and stay there till we call.

[Exit Attendant.]

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

FIRST MUR. It was, so please your highness.

MACB.

Well then, now

Have you consider'd of my speeches? Know
 That it was he in the times past which held you
 So under fortune, which you thought had been
 Our innocent self: this I made good to you
 In our last conference; pass'd in probation with you,

66 *rancours*] malignant sentiment.

the vessel of my peace] Cf. *Romans*, ix, 22-23, "the vessels of wrath . . .
 the vessels of mercy."

67 *mine eternal jewel*] my immortal soul.

69 *seed*] Pope's correction of the Folio reading *seeds*.

71 *champion me to the utterance*] fight for me to the last extremity (à l'outrance).

72 (Stage Direction) *two Murderers*] These hired assassins are not professional murderers, but discharged soldiers, who cherish a grievance against Banquo. See lines 80-84, *infra*.

79 *pass'd in probation with you*] proved to you point by point.

How you were borne in hand, how cross'd, the instru-
 ments, 80
 Who wrought with them, and all things else that might
 To half a soul and to a notion crazed
 Say "Thus did Banquo."

FIRST MUR. You made it known to us.

MACB. I did so; and went further, which is now
 Our point of second meeting. Do you find
 Your patience so predominant in your nature,
 That you can let this go? Are you so gospell'd,
 To pray for this good man and for his issue,
 Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave
 And beggar'd yours for ever?

FIRST MUR. We are men, my liege. 90

MACB. Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;
 As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels,
 curs,
 Shoughs, water-rugs and demi-wolves, are clept
 All by the name of dogs: the valued file
 Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,

80 *borne in hand*] deluded (by false hope). Cf. *Hamlet*, II, ii, 67: "[He]
 Was falsely borne in hand."

the instruments] the tools or agents of oppression.

82 *a notion crazed*] a mad mind, an intellect having the smallest powers
 of ratiocination.

87 *Are you so gospell'd*] Are you of that degree of piety which is pre-
 scribed by the gospel? Cf. *Matthew*, v, 44: "But I say unto you . . .
 pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

93 *Shoughs, water-rugs . . . clept*] Shaggy dogs, curly-haired water dogs,
 and dogs crossed by a wolf, are called or designed.

94 *the valued file*] the catalogue raisonnée, the schedule with the items set
 out according to value.

The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him closed, whereby he does receive
Particular addition, from the bill
That writes them all alike: and so of men. 100
Now if you have a station in the file,
Not i' the worst rank of manhood, say it,
And I will put that business in your bosoms
Whose execution takes your enemy off,
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,
Who wear our health but sickly in his life,
Which in his death were perfect.

SEC. MUR. I am one, my liege,
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
Have so incensed that I am reckless what
I do to spite the world.

FIRST MUR. And I another 110
So weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune,
That I would set my life on any chance,
To mend it or be rid on't.

MACB. Both of you
Know Banquo was your enemy.

BOTH MUR. True, my lord.

MACB. So is he mine, and in such bloody distance

96 *The housekeeper*] The house dog or watch dog.

99-100 *Particular addition . . . all alike*] Special title or attribute, apart from the general list which enters all the items by the general title of "dog."

101 *a station in the file*] a definite place in the select catalogue.

111 *tugg'd with fortune*] worried by fortune, as a rat is worried by a dog.

115 *distance*] hostility, antagonism. Bacon, *Essays*, XV, speaks of "setting" men at "distance," i. e., at variance.

That every minute of his being thrusts
 Against my near'st of life: and though I could
 With barefaced power sweep him from my sight
 And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not,
 For certain friends that are both his and mine, 120
 Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall
 Who I myself struck down: and thence it is
 That I to your assistance do make love,
 Masking the business from the common eye
 For sundry weighty reasons.

SEC. MUR. We shall, my lord,
 Perform what you command us.

FIRST MUR. Though our lives —

MACB. Your spirits shine through you. Within this
 hour at most

I will advise you where to plant yourselves,
 Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time,
 The moment on 't; for 't must be done to-night, 130
 And something from the palace; always thought
 That I require a clearness: and with him —
 To leave no rubs nor botches in the work —

117 *my near'st of life*] my most vital part.

119 *bid my will avouch it*] order my will to give final warrant for it, let my mere will be the deed's complete justification.

120-122 *For certain friends . . . his fall Who I*] Because of certain friends . . . I cannot but express grief for the fall of him whom I . . .

129 *the perfect spy o' the time*] the critical juncture when the deed must be done. A third man is to join the two murderers and give the signal for the fatal blow.

131-132 *And something . . . clearness*] And at some distance from the palace; it being always kept in mind that I must stand clear of all suspicion.

133 *no rubs nor botches*] no obstacles nor clumsy blunders. "Rubs" was a

MACBETH

ACT III

Fleance his son, that keeps him company,
 Whose absence is no less material to me
 Than is his father's, must embrace the fate
 Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart:
 I 'll come to you anon.

BOTH MUR. We are resolved, my lord.

MACB. I 'll call upon you straight: abide within.

[*Exeunt Murderers.*]

It is concluded: Banquo, thy soul's flight, 140
 If it find heaven, must find it out to-night. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II — THE PALACE

Enter LADY MACBETH *and* a Servant

LADY M. Is Banquo gone from court?

SERV. Ay, madam, but returns again to-night.

LADY M. Say to the king, I would attend his leisure
 For a few words.

SERV. Madam, I will. [*Exit.*]

LADY M. Nought 's had, all 's spent,
 Where our desire is got without content:
 'Tis safer to be that which we destroy
 Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

technical term in the game of bowls, for any obstacle in the path of a
 throw.

137 *Resolve yourselves*] Steel or confirm your resolution.

3 *attend his leisure*] wait till he is at leisure.

Enter MACBETH

How now, my lord! why do you keep alone,
 Of sorriest fancies your companions making;
 Using those thoughts which should indeed have died 10
 With them they think on? Things without all remedy
 Should be without regard: what's done is done.

MACB. We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it:
 She'll close and be herself, whilst our poor malice
 Remains in danger of her former tooth.
 But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds
 suffer,
 Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
 In the affliction of these terrible dreams
 That shake us nightly: better be with the dead,
 Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace, 20
 Than on the torture of the mind to lie
 In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave;

10 *Using*] Cherishing.

11-12 *Things . . . regard*] Cf. *Wint. Tale*, III, ii, 219-220: "What's gone and what's past help Should be past grief," and note.

13 *scotch'd*] wounded, mutilated, slashed. Cf. *Cor.*, IV, v, 186-187: "he scotched him and notched him like a carbonado." *Scotch'd* is Theobald's universally adopted emendation of the Folio reading *scorch'd*.

16-17 *let the frame . . . Ere we will*] let the universe dissolve, let both the terrestrial and celestial worlds suffer before we resign ourselves to.

20 *our peace*] Thus the First Folio. The later Folios substitute *our place*. Macbeth is thinking of the peace that ought to come of realised ambition. The repetition of the word "peace" is in Shakespeare's manner.

21 *on the torture*] on the rack.

22 *ecstasy*] frenzy.

MACBETH

ACT III

After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further.

LADY M. Come on;
Gentle my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks;
Be bright and jovial among your guests to-night.

MACB. So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be you:
Let your remembrance apply to Banquo; 30
Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue:
Unsafe the while, that we
Must lave our honours in these flattering streams,
And make our faces visards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.

LADY M. You must leave this.

MACB. O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.

LADY M. But in them nature's copy 's not eterne.

27 *sleek o'er*] smooth over.

30 *Let your remembrance . . . Banquo*] Remember that you treat Banquo especially in the "bright and jovial" way you suggest. Lady Macbeth knows nothing of her husband's murderous designs.

31 *Present him eminence*] Pay him the highest honours.

32-35 *Unsafe the while . . . they are*] The passage is difficult and the short line 32 ("unsafe . . . we") suggests that something is lost. The meaning seems to be that we are insecure on our thrones, so long as we have to employ the flattering art of dissimulation to protect our position, and to make our faces wear hypocritical expressions which conceal the feelings of our hearts. "Visards" is often used for "masks."

38 *nature's copy 's not eterne*] the tenure by which life is held of nature is not perpetual. "Copy" means "copyhold tenure," "lease."

MACB. There's comfort yet; they are assailable;
 Then be thou jocund: ere the bat hath flown 40
 His cloister'd flight; ere to black Hecate's summons
 The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hums
 Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
 A deed of dreadful note.

LADY M. What's to be done?

MACB. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
 Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling night,
 Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,
 And with thy bloody and invisible hand
 Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
 Which keeps me pale! Light thickens, and the crow 50
 Makes wing to the rooky wood:

40-41 *the bat . . . cloister'd flight*] the bat is often seen wheeling in flight about the roof of cloisters or cloistered passages.

41 *to black Hecate's summons*] in obedience to the summons of dark night. Hecate in classical mythology was primarily the name that Diana bore in her capacity of goddess of the moon; it was thence transferred to the queen of the infernal regions, the patroness of witches, and the queen of night. Here Hecate is merely employed as a personification of the night. Cf. II, i, 52, *supra*, and III, v, 1 *seq.*, *infra*.

42 *shard-borne*] borne on its shards or scaly wings. Cf. *Cymb.*, III, iii, 20: "The *sharded* beetle." Strictly, "shard" is the case in which the beetle keeps his wings when not in use.

43 *yawning peal*] call to sleep.

44 *note*] meaning, significance.

46 *seeling*] a technical term in falconry for sewing up the eyes of hawks to make them tractable.

49 *Cancel . . . bond*] Legal phraseology. Cf. *Rich.* III, IV, iv, 77: "Cancel his bond of life." Here "that great bond" is Banquo's life.

50 *thickens*] grows dull.

51 *rooky*] murky, misty. The word is still so used in provincial dialect.

Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
 Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.
 Thou marvell'st at my words: but hold thee still;
 Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill:
 So, prithee, go with me. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III—A PARK NEAR THE PALACE

Enter three Murderers

FIRST MUR. But who did bid thee join with us?

THIRD MUR. Macbeth.

SEC. MUR. He needs not our mistrust; since he
 delivers

Our offices, and what we have to do,
 To the direction just.

FIRST MUR. Then stand with us.
 The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day:
 Now spurs the lated traveller apace

53 *night's black agents*] thieves, robbers, and all noxious things which
 work by night.

2 *He needs not our mistrust*] There is no need to mistrust him. Some commentators maintain that the third murderer is Macbeth himself, and that the lines of this speech fitly explain Macbeth's promise (III, i, 128-130, *supra*) to give the murderers subsequently precise directions in regard to the commission of the crime. A chief objection to this theory lies in the third murderer's plain intimation that he witnesses Fleance's escape (line 20), and in Macbeth's quite obviously sincere surprise (III, iv, 17 *seq.*, *infra*) at learning of that fact from the first and second murderers.

6 *lated*] belated.

To gain the timely inn, and near approaches
The subject of our watch.

THIRD MUR. Hark ! I hear horses.

BAN. [*Within*] Give us a light there, ho !

SEC. MUR. Then 't is he : the rest
That are within the note of expectation 10
Already are i' the court.

FIRST MUR. His horses go about.

THIRD MUR. Almost a mile : but he does usually —
So all men do — from hence to the palace gate
Make it their walk.

SEC. MUR. A light, a light !

Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE with a torch

THIRD MUR. 'T is he.

FIRST MUR. Stand to 't.

BAN. It will be rain to-night.

FIRST MUR. Let it come down.

[They set upon Banquo.]

BAN. O, treachery ! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly !
Thou mayst revenge. O slave ! *[Dies. Fleance escapes.]*

THIRD MUR. Who did strike out the light ?

FIRST MUR. Was 't not the way ?

THIRD MUR. There 's but one down ; the son is fled.

SEC. MUR. We have lost
Best half of our affair. 21

FIRST MUR. Well, let 's away and say how much is
done. *[Exeunt.]*

10 *within the note of expectation*] on the list of expected guests.

19 *Was 't not the way?*] Was it not the best means of evading discovery ?

SCENE IV — HALL IN THE PALACE

A banquet prepared. Enter MACBETH, LADY MACBETH, ROSS, LENNOX, Lords, and Attendants

MACB. You know your own degrees; sit down: at first

And last the hearty welcome.

LORDS. Thanks to your majesty.

MACB. Ourself will mingle with society
And play the humble host.

Our hostess keeps her state, but in best time

We will require her welcome.

LADY M. Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our friends,
For my heart speaks they are welcome.

Enter first Murderer to the door

MACB. See, they encounter thee with their hearts'
thanks.

Both sides are even: here I 'll sit i' the midst:

Be large in mirth; anon we 'll drink a measure

The table round. [*Approaching the door*] There 's blood
upon thy face.

MUR. 'T is Banquo's then.

1 *degrees*] ranks of precedence.

5 *her state*] her chair of state, her throne.

6 *require her welcome*] ask or request her to give us welcome.

11 *large*] liberal, free.

MACB. 'T is better thee without than he within.
Is he dispatch'd?

MUR. My lord, his throat is cut; that I did for him.

MACB. Thou art the best o' the cut-throats: yet he 's
good

That did the like for Fleance: if thou didst it,
Thou art the nonpareil.

MUR. Most royal sir,
Fleance is 'scaped.

20

MACB. [*Aside*] Then comes my fit again: I had else
been perfect,

Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,
As broad and general as the casing air:
But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confined, bound in
To saucy doubts and fears. — But Banquo 's safe?

MUR. Ay, my good lord: safe in a ditch he bides,
With twenty trenched gashes on his head;
The least a death to nature.

MACB. Thanks for that.
[*Aside*] There the grown serpent lies; the worm that 's fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for the present. Get thee gone: to-morrow
We 'll hear ourselves again. [*Exit Murderer.*]

30

LADY M. My royal lord,

14 'T is better . . . within] 'T is better for Banquo's blood to be on thy face than in his veins. The grammar is faulty.

19 the nonpareil] the paragon, a man of unapproachable merit.

23 As broad . . . air] With scope as full and free as the ambient air.

24 cabin'd, cribb'd] kept in a cabin and a crib.

27 trenched] deeply carved. Cf. "intrenchant" V, viii, 9, *infra*.

32 ourselves again] an absolute clause; "when we have recovered."

MACBETH

ACT III

You do not give the cheer: the feast is sold
That is not often vouch'd, while 't is a-making,
'T is given with welcome: to feed were best at home;
From thence the sauce to meat is ceremony;
Meeting were bare without it.

MACB. Sweet remembrancer!
Now good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both!

LEN. May 't please your highness sit.

[*The Ghost of Banquo enters, and sits in Macbeth's place.*]

MACB. Here had we now our country's honour roof'd, 40
Were the graced person of our Banquo present;
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
Than pity for mischance!

ROSS. His absence, sir,
Lays blame upon his promise. Please 't your highness
To grace us with your royal company.

MACB. The table 's full.

LEN. Here is a place reserved, sir.

MACB. Where?

LEN. Here, my good lord. What is 't that moves
your highness?

33-35 *You do not give . . . welcome*] You do not offer welcome; the feast is like a dinner paid for at an inn, when the assurance of hospitality is not frequently made to the guest, while the entertainment is in progress.
36 *ceremony*] ceremonial courtesy.

40 (Stage Direction) *The Ghost of Banquo enters*] The ghost neither speaks nor is seen by anyone besides Macbeth. It is clearly an hallucination, and should not be materially presented on the stage.

Here . . . roof'd] All the nobility of the country would be assembled under our roof.

41 *graced*] gracious. Cf. *Lear*, I, iv, 245: "a graced palace."

MACB. Which of you have done this?

LORDS. What, my good lord?

MACB. Thou canst not say I did it: never shake
Thy gory locks at me. 50

ROSS. Gentlemen, rise; his highness is not well.

LADY M. Sit, worthy friends: my lord is often thus,
And hath been from his youth: pray you, keep seat;
The fit is momentary; upon a thought,
He will again be well: if much you note him,
You shall offend him and extend his passion:
Feed, and regard him not. Are you a man?

MACB. Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that
Which might appal the devil.

LADY M. O proper stuff! 60
This is the very painting of your fear:
This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,
Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws and starts,
Impostors to true fear, would well become
A woman's story at a winter's fire,
Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself!
Why do you make such faces? When all 's done,
You look but on a stool.

MACB. Prithce, see there! behold! look! lo! how
say you?
Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too. 70
If charnel-houses and our graves must send

55 *upon a thought*] as quick as thought, in a moment.

57 *extend his passion*] prolong his fit of suffering.

60 *O proper stuff!*] Stuff and nonsense!

63-64 *these flaws . . . fear*] these gusts and starts of emotion, mere impostors, counterfeits, when compared with real sense of fear.

Those that we bury back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites. [Exit Ghost.

LADY M. What, quite unmann'd in folly?

MACB. If I stand here, I saw him.

LADY M. Fie, for shame!

MACB. Blood hath been shed ere now, i' the olden
time,

Ere humane statute purged the gentle weal;
Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd
Too terrible for the ear: the time has been,
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end; but now they rise again, 80
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,
And push us from our stools: this is more strange
Than such a murder is.

LADY M. My worthy lord,
Your noble friends do lack you.

MACB. I do forget.
Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends;
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
To those that know me. Come, love and health to all;
Then I'll sit down. Give me some wine, fill full.
I drink to the general joy o' the whole table,

73 *the maws of kites*] Kites and other carnivorous birds were supposed to absorb their prey into their stomachs without digesting it.

76 *Ere humane . . . gentle weal*] Ere civilised legislation purged the commonwealth of barbarism and made it gentle and urbane.

78 *the time has been*] The First Folio reads *the times has been* and the later Folios *the times have been*.

84 *lack you*] miss your attention.

85 *muse*] wonder, be amazed.

And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss; 90
 Would he were here! to all and him we thirst,
 And all to all.

LORDS. Our duties, and the pledge.

Re-enter Ghost

MACB. Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!

Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood ^{is} cold;
 Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
 Which thou dost glare with.

LADY M. Think of this, good peers,
 But as a thing of custom: 't is no other;
 Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

MACB. What man dare, I dare:
 Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear, 100
 The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger;
 Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
 Shall never tremble: or be alive again,
 And dare me to the desert with thy sword;
 If trembling I inhabit then, protest me

91-92 to all . . . to all] we crave to drink to all and to him, and to wish all good wishes to every one.

95 speculation] faculty of vision.

101 The arm'd rhinoceros] A reference to the animal's hard and impenetrable hide.

the Hyrcan tiger] Cf. *3 Hen. VI*, I, iv, 155: "tigers of Hyrcania," a wild region on the shores of the Caspian sea.

105 inhabit] Thus the Folios. The passage is difficult. *Inhibit* and *inherit* have been suggested for *inhabit* without improving the text. "*Inhabit*" seems to be used here intransitively in the sense of live, dwell, or stay. Cf. *Two Gent.*, IV, ii, 47: "Love . . . inhabits there," and

MACBETH

ACT III

The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mockery, hence! [Exit Ghost.]

Why, so: being gone,
I am a man again. Pray you, sit still.

LADY M. You have displaced the mirth, broke the
good meeting,
With most admired disorder.

MACB. Can such things be, 110
And overcome 's like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,
When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine is blanch'd with fear.

ROSS. What sights, my lord?

LADY M. I pray you, speak not; he grows worse and
worse;
Question enrages him: at once, good night:
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.

LEN. Good night; and better health 120
Attend his majesty!

Milton's *Paradise Lost*, vii, 162: "Meanwhile *inhabit* lax, ye powers of heaven."

105-106 *protest . . . girl*] declare me to be a child's doll.

110 *most admired disorder*] disorder or disturbance provoking complete astonishment.

111-113 *And overcome us . . . owe*] And pass over us like a summer's cloud without exciting any special surprise. You make me a stranger to, you make me doubtful of, the courageous temperament that I think myself ordinarily to possess.

119 *Stand not . . . going*] Do not stop to leave in order of precedence.

LADY M. A kind good night to all!

[*Exeunt all but Macbeth and Lady M.*]

MACB. It will have blood: they say blood will have blood:

Stones have been known to move and trees to speak;
Augures and understood relations have
By maggot-pies and choughs and rooks brought forth
The secret'st man of blood. What is the night?

LADY M. Almost at odds with morning, which is which.

MACB. How say'st thou, that Macduff denies his person
At our great bidding?

LADY M. Did you send to him, sir?

MACB. I hear it by the way, but I will send: 190
There's not a one of them but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd. I will to-morrow,
And betimes I will, to the weird sisters:
More shall they speak, for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good
All causes shall give way: I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,

123 *Stones . . . move*] Doubtless the gravestones covering the corpses of murdered men.

124 *Augures . . . relations*] Auguries or prognostications of the secret relations or order of things as understood by professional soothsayers.

125 *maggot-pies and choughs*] magpies and jackdaws.

128 *How say'st thou, that*] What do you think of the fact that . . .

131 *not a one*] never a one.

132 *fee'd*] in my pay as a spy.

136 *causes*] considerations.

Returning were as tedious as go o'er:
 Strange things I have in head that will to hand,
 Which must be acted ere they may be scann'd. 140

LADY M. You lack the season of all natures, sleep.

MACB. Come, we 'll to sleep. My strange and self-
 abuse

Is the initiate fear that wants hard use:

We are yet but young in deed. [Exeunt.

SCENE V — A HEATH

Thunder. Enter the three Witches, meeting HECATE

FIRST WITCH. Why, how now, Hecate! you look
 angrily.

HEC. Have I not reason, beldams as you are,
 Saucy and over-bold? How did you dare
 To trade and traffic with Macbeth
 In riddles and affairs of death;
 And I, the mistress of your charms,
 The close contriver of all harms,
 Was never call'd to bear my part,

138 *as go o'er*] as to go forward.

140 *scann'd*] scrutinised.

141 *the season*] the seasoning or preservative.

142-143 *My strange . . . hard use*] My strange self-deception or self-
 delusion (*and* is redundant) is the fear of a novice, which calls for,
 or will be cured by, stringent discipline and experience.

1 *Hecate*] the patroness of witches in classical mythology. See note on II,
 i, 52, and III, ii, 41, *supra*.

7 *close*] secret.

Or show the glory of our art?
 And, which is worse, all you have done 10
 Hath been but for a wayward son,
 Spiteful and wrathful; who, as others do,
 Loves for his own ends, not for you.
 But make amends now: get you gone,
 And at the pit of Acheron
 Meet me i' the morning: thither he
 Will come to know his destiny:
 Your vessels and your spells provide,
 Your charms and every thing beside.
 I am for the air; this night I'll spend 20
 Unto a dismal and a fatal end:
 Great business must be wrought ere noon:
 Upon the corner of the moon
 There hangs a vaporous drop profound:
 I'll catch it ere it come to ground:
 And that distill'd by magic sleights
 Shall raise such artificial sprites
 As by the strength of their illusion
 Shall draw him on to his confusion:
 He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear 30
 His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace and fear:

15 *the pit of Acheron*] See note on *Mids. N. Dr.*, III, ii, 357. Acheron, which is properly a river of Hades, here seems loosely applied to some tarn or fountain in a region inhabited by witches.

20 *for the air*] on the point of flying.

23-24 *Upon the corner . . . profound*] The moon was credited by classical authors with exuding a poisonous foam, which falling on certain plants endowed them with powers of enchantment. "Profound" means "possessed of deep or mysterious qualities."

MACBETH

ACT III

And you all know security
Is mortals' chiefest enemy. .

[*Music and a song within*: "Come away, come away," etc.]

Hark! I am call'd; my little spirit, see,

Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me. [Exit.]

FIRST WITCH. Come, let 's make haste; she 'll soon
be back again. [Exeunt.]

SCENE VI — FORRES

THE PALACE

Enter LENNOX and another Lord

LEN. My former speeches have but hit your thoughts,
Which can interpret farther: only I say
Things have been strangely borne. The gracious
Duncan

Was pitied of Macbeth: marry, he was dead:
And the right-valiant Banquo walk'd too late;
Whom, you may say, if 't please you, Fleance kill'd,
For Fleance fled: men must not walk too late.

32 *security*] over-confidence, carelessness.

33 (Stage Direction) *Music . . . Come away, come away*] Capell's substitution for the twofold stage direction of the Folios: "*Musicke, and a Song,*" and "*Sing within Come away, come away, etc.,*" that follows two lines below. In Middleton's *Witch*, III, iii, 39-58, Hecate joins in a song of some twenty lines beginning with the words "Come away, come away." The song was doubtless by Middleton, and was interpolated in an early acting version of *Macbeth*.

SCENE VI (Stage Direction) *Enter LENNOX and another Lord*] Thus the Folios. It is difficult to understand why an anonymous lord is introduced. ANGUS or ROSS might well be substituted for "*another Lord.*"

MACBETH

LORD. The son of Duncan,
From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,
Lives in the English court, and is received
Of the most pious Edward with such grace
That the malevolence of fortune nothing
Takes from his high respect. Thither Macduff
Is gone to pray the holy king, upon his aid

30

8 *Who cannot want the thought*] Who cannot help thinking.
21 *from broad words*] owing to downright speech.
25 *holds the due of birth*] withholds the birthright, inheritance. Cf. *Rich.*
III, III, vii, 120 and 158.
30-31 *upon his aid . . . Siward*] to secure his assistance in rousing the
Earl of Northumberland and his son the warlike Siward (to support
Malcolm's cause).

To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward:
 That by the help of these, with Him above
 To ratify the work, we may again
 Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,
 Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives,
 Do faithful homage and receive free honours:
 All which we pine for now: and this report
 Hath so exasperate the king that he
 Prepares for some attempt of war.

LEN.

Sent he to Macduff?

LORD. He did: and with an absolute "Sir, not I," 40
 The cloudy messenger turns me his back,
 And hums, as who should say "You'll rue the time
 That clogs me with this answer."

LEN.

And that well might

Advise him to a caution, to hold what distance
 His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel
 Fly to the court of England and unfold
 His message ere he come, that a swift blessing
 May soon return to this our suffering country
 Under a hand accursed!

LORD.

I'll send my prayers with him.

[Exeunt.]

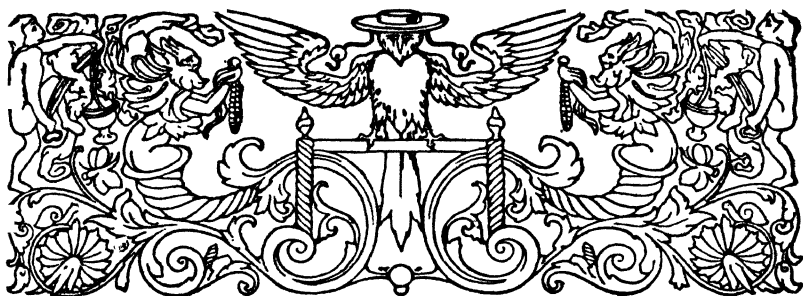
36 *[free honours]* honours enjoyed without risk of exciting jealousy.

38 *exasperate]* a common form of "exasperated."

the king] Macbeth. Hanmer's correction of the Folio reading *their king*.

41-42 *The cloudy messenger . . . say]* The frowning messenger turns his back and hums as if he were saying. "Me" in "turns me his back" is the ethic dative.

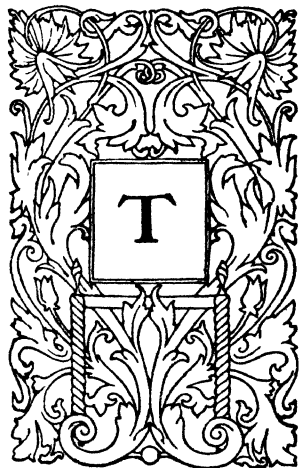
48-49 *our suffering country Under]* our country suffering under. Such transposition is no uncommon construction.



ACT FOURTH — SCENE I — A CAVERN
 IN THE MIDDLE, A BOILING CAULDRON

Thunder. Enter the three Witches

FIRST WITCH



THRICE THE BRINDED
 cat hath mew'd.

SEC. WITCH. Thrice and once
 the hedge-pig whined.

THIRD WITCH. Harpier cries
 "'T is time, 't is time."

FIRST WITCH. Round about
 the cauldron go:
 In the poison'd entrails throw.
 Toad, that under cold stone
 Days and nights has thirty one
 Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
 Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

ALL. Double, double toil and trouble; 10
 Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

¹ *brinded*] brindled, striped.

MACBETH

ACT IV

SEC. WITCH. Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

ALL. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

THIRD WITCH. Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witches' mummy, maw and gulf
Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark,
Root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark,
Liver of blaspheming Jew,
Gall of goat and slips of yew
Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse,

2 *Thrice and once*] Four times. The witches only used odd numbers
in their incantations. Cf. I, iii, 35-36, *supra*.

hedge-pig] hedge-hog.

3 *Harpier*] the name of a familiar spirit, probably formed from "harpy."

8 *Swelter'd venom*] Poison exuded by the toad, and diffused over its body.

16 *fork*] forked tongue.

blind-worm's sting] Cf. *Tim. of Ath.*, IV, iii, 181: "eyeless venom'd
worm."

17 *howlet*] the contemporary spelling of "owlet."

23 *mummy*] a thick liquid said to be exuded by Egyptian mummies, and
widely used in medicine.

gulf] swallow, throat, gullet.

24 *ravin'd*] gluttonous, ravenous. Cf. II, iv, 28, *supra*: "*ravin* up."

28 *Sliver'd . . . eclipse*] Cut into slivers or slips, in the inauspicious
season of the moon's eclipse.

Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,
 Finger of birth-strangled babe
 Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,
 Make the gruel thick and slab:
 Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,
 For the ingredients of our cauldron.

30

ALL. Double, double toil and trouble;
 Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

SEC. WITCH. Cool it with a baboon's blood,
 Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter HECATE to the other three Witches

HEC. O, well done! I commend your pains;
 And every one shall share i' the gains:
 And now about the cauldron sing,
 Like elves and fairies in a ring,
 Enchanting all that you put in.

40

[Music and a song: "Black spirits," etc.]

[Hecate retires.]

SEC. WITCH. By the pricking of my thumbs,
 Something wicked this way comes:
 Open, locks,
 Whoever knocks!

32 *slab*] glutinous.

33 *chaudron*] entrails.

34 *ingredients*] Rowe's substitution for the Folio reading *ingredience*.

Cf. I, vii, 11, *supra*.

43 (Stage Direction) *Music and a song: "Black spirits," etc.*] Thus the Folios. In Middleton's *Witch*, V, ii, 60-69, Hecate sings a song beginning "Black spirits and white, red spirits and grey." The song was doubtless by Middleton and interpolated in an early acting version of *Macbeth*. Cf. III, v, 33, *supra*, and note.

Enter MACBETH

MACB. How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!

What is't you do?

ALL. A deed without a name.

MACB. I conjure you, by that which you profess, 50
Howe'er you come to know it, answer me:
Though you untie the winds and let them fight
Against the churches; though the yesty waves
Confound and swallow navigation up;
Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown down;
Though castles topple on their warders' heads;
Though palaces and pyramids do slope
Their heads to their foundations; though the treasure
Of nature's germins tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken; answer me 60
To what I ask you.

FIRST WITCH. Speak.

SEC. WITCH. Demand.

53 *ysty*] frothy, after the manner of yeast.

55 *bladed corn be lodged*] corn in the blade, before it reach the ear, be beaten down by the wind. Cf. 2 *Hen. VI*, III, ii, 176: "Like to the summer's corn by tempest *lodged*."

58-60 *though the treasure . . . sicken*] The sense is as in *Lear*, III, ii, 8: "Crack nature's moulds, all *germins* spill at once." The meaning seems to be that the seeds of matter in nature's treasury may come into conflict with one another, even till ruin grows weary of its work of destruction; all nature (in other words) may be threatened by chaos. Theobald first suggested *germins* (*i. e.*, germens), in place of the *germaine* or *germain* of the Folios. Pope read *germains*, which he awkwardly interpreted "kindred elements or relatives."

THIRD WITCH.

We'll answer.

FIRST WITCH. Say, if thou 'dst rather hear it from
our mouths,

Or from our masters?

MACB.

Call 'em, let me see 'em.

FIRST WITCH. Pour in sow's blood, that hath
eatenHer nine farrow; grease that's sweaten
From the murderer's gibbet throw'
Into the flame.

ALL.

Come, high or low;
Thyself and office deftly show!*Thunder. First Apparition: an armed Head*

MACB. Tell me, thou unknown power, —

FIRST WITCH.

He knows thy thought:

Hear his speech, but say thou nought.

70

FIRST APP. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware
Macduff;Beware the thane of Fife. Dismiss me: enough. [*Descends.*]MACB. Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution
thanks;

Thou hast harp'd my fear aright: but one word more, —

FIRST WITCH. He will not be commanded: here 's
another,More potent than the first.65 *Her nine farrow*] Her litter of nine.69 (Stage Direction) *an armed Head*] A symbolical representation of
Macbeth's helmeted head cut off by Macduff. Cf. Stage Direction,
V, viii, 53, *infra*.74 *harp'd . . . aright*] guessed rightly, struck the right note, as of a harpist
sounding the right string.

MACBETH

ACT IV

Thunder. Second Apparition: a bloody Child

SEC. APP. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

MACB. Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.

SEC. APP. Be bloody, bold and resolute; laugh to
scorn

The power of man, for none of woman born 80
Shall harm Macbeth.

[Descends.]

MACB. Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of
thee?

But yet I'll make assurance double sure,
And take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live;
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder.

*Thunder. Third Apparition: a Child crowned, with a tree in his
hand*

What is this,
That rises like the issue of a king,
And wears upon his baby-brow the round
And top of sovereignty?

77 (Stage Direction) *Second Apparition: a bloody Child*] A presentation of the infant Macduff who "was from his mother's womb Untimely ripp'd." Cf. V, viii, 15-16, *infra*.

84 *take a bond of fate*] take a bond or pledge from fate.

86 (Stage Direction) *a Child . . . hand*] Duncan's son Malcolm, who ordered his soldiers to cut down the boughs of Birnam wood on moving to attack Macbeth's castle of Dunsinane. Cf. V, iv, 4, *infra*.

88-89 *the round And top of sovereignty*] the circular band and the ornament surmounting the sovereign's crown.

ALL. Listen, but speak not to 't.

THIRD APP. Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no
care

90

Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:

Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until

Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill

Shall come against him.

[*Descends.*]

MACB. That will never be:

Who can impress the forest, bid the tree

Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements! good!

Rebellion's head, rise never, till the wood

Of Birnam rise, and our high-placed Macbeth

Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath

To time and mortal custom. Yet my heart

100

Throbs to know one thing: tell me, if your art

Can tell so much: shall Banquo's issue ever

Reign in this kingdom?

ALL. Seek to know no more.

MACB. I will be satisfied: deny me this,

93 *Dunsinane*] The second syllable is here accented, in accordance with local custom, the place being now spelt Dunsinan. Below, Shakespeare always accents the word wrongly on the first and third syllables.

95 *impress the forest*] press or enlist the forest into one's service.

96 *Sweet bodements!*] Auspicious prophecies!

97 *Rebellion's head*] Hanmer's correction of the Folio reading *Rebellious dead*, which, however, may be a quite intelligible reference to Banquo's death.

99-100 *Shall live . . . custom*] Shall live the full term of life, and then die a natural death in the ordinary way.

And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me know:
Why sinks that cauldron? and what noise is this?

[*Haulboys.*

FIRST WITCH. Show!

SEC. WITCH. Show!

THIRD WITCH. Show!

ALL. Show his eyes, and grieve his heart; 110
Come like shadows, so depart!

*A show of eight Kings, the last with a glass in his hand; Banquo's
Ghost following*

MACB. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo: down!
Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls. And thy hair,
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.
A third is like the former. Filthy hags!
Why do you show me this? A fourth! Start, eyes!

106 *what noise*] what music. The usage is not uncommon. Cf. "a sound"
(i. e., a musical accompaniment to a dance), line 129, *infra*.

112 (Stage Direction) *A show . . . following*] The Folios read *A show of
eight kings, and Banquo last, with a glasse in his hand*. But accord-
ing to the succeeding text, the eighth king in the apparition bears the
glass, and Banquo is mentioned after him. The eight kings represent
the issue of Banquo's son, Fleance, who was reckoned the ancestor
of the Stuart dynasty. The first Stuart King of Scotland was Robert II,
who reigned from 1371 to 1390. He is reckoned to have descended
from Fleance in the sixth or seventh generation. Apparitions of him
and his seven royal successors now pass before Macbeth's gaze, the
eighth monarch being James VI of Scotland and James I of Eng-
land. Kings alone are shown by the witches; King James's mother,
Queen Mary Stuart, is omitted.

116 *Start, eyes!*] Macbeth bids his eyes start from their sockets, and
destroy his power of vision.

What, will the line stretch out to the crack of doom?
 Another yet! A seventh! I'll see no more:
 And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
 Which shows me many more; and some I see 120
 That two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry:
 Horrible sight! Now I see 't is true;
 For the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles upon me,
 And points at them for his. What, is this so?

FIRST WITCH. Ay, sir, all this is so: but why
 Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?

Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites,
 And show the best of our delights:
 I'll charm the air to give a sound,
 While you perform your antic round, 130
 That this great king may kindly say
 Our duties did his welcome pay.

[*Music. The Witches dance, and then vanish, with Hecate.*]

MACB. Where are they? Gone? Let this pernicious
 hour

Stand aye accursed in the calendar!
 Come in, without there!

117 *crack of doom*] peal of thunder announcing the Last Judgment.

119 *a glass*] a magic mirror or crystal, in which future events are made visible.

121 *two-fold balls and treble sceptres*] the insignia of King James, who, having submitted to the rite of double coronation at Scone and Westminster, was entitled to bear two balls or globes as emblems respectively of the kingdoms of England and Scotland, together with the sceptres of the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

123 *blood-bolter'd*] matted with blood. "Boltered" is still used in the mid-land counties of England of "clotted" or "matted" hair.

130 *antic round*] grotesque or fantastic dance.

MACBETH

ACT IV

Enter LENNOX

LEN. What 's your grace's will?

MACB. Saw you the weird sisters?

LEN. No, my lord.

MACB. Came they not by you?

LEN. No indeed, my lord.

MACB. Infected be the air whereon they ride,
And damn'd all those that trust them! I did hear
The galloping of horse: who was 't came by? 140

LEN. 'T is two or three, my lord, that bring you
word

Macduff is fled to England.

MACB. Fled to England!

LEN. Ay, my good lord.

MACB. [*Aside*] Time, thou anticipatest my dread ex-
ploits:

The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
Unless the deed go with it: from this moment
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:
The castle of Macduff I will surmise; 150
Seize upon Fife; give to the edge o' the sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls

144 *anticipatest*] preventest, removes the opportunity of.

145-146 *The flighty purpose . . . go with it*] Cf. *Meas. for Meas.*, V, i, 449:

"His act did not o'ertake his bad intent." "Flighty" means "swift,"

"speedy," "immediate."

147 *The very firstlings of my heart*] The very first things that I think of.

That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool;
 This deed I 'll do before this purpose cool:
 But no more sights! — Where are these gentlemen?
 Come, bring me where they are. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II — FIFE

MACDUFF'S CASTLE

Enter LADY MACDUFF, *her* Son, *and* Ross

L. MACD. What had he done, to make him fly the
 land?

Ross. You must have patience, madam.

L. MACD. He had none:
 His flight was madness: when our actions do not,
 Our fears do make us traitors.

Ross. You know not
 Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.

L. MACD. Wisdom! to leave his wife, to leave his
 babes,
 His mansion and his titles, in a place
 From whence himself does fly? He loves us not;
 He wants the natural touch: for the poor wren,

153 *trace him*] follow him.

155 *But no more sights!*] Macbeth has had enough of apparitions.

3-4 *when our actions . . . traitors*] although our actions are not inspired
 by treachery, our fears may prompt conduct to expose us to that
 imputation.

9 *the natural touch*] the sensibility of natural affection.

9-11 *the poor wren . . . owl*] Ornithologists point out that the ordinary wren

The most diminutive of birds, will fight,
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.
All is the fear and nothing is the love;
As little is the wisdom, where the flight
So runs against all reason. 10

Ross. My dearest coz,
I pray you, school yourself: but, for your husband,
He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o' the season. I dare not speak much further:
But cruel are the times, when we are traitors
And do not know ourselves; when we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear, 20
But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way and move. I take my leave of you:
Shall not be long but I'll be here again:
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward

is not the smallest of birds, though the golden crested wren has some claim to that designation. The common blue-tit rather than the wren should, too, be credited with fighting birds of prey in defence of its young. It is only the barn-door owl which has been known to raid the nests of fledgelings.

17 *The fits o' the season*] The critical conditions, perilous turns, of the time.
19-22 *And do not know ourselves . . . move*] And do not know ourselves to be traitors, in fact do not know what we are or what we are doing; when we interpret rumour in the light of our fear, yet are not certain what we have to fear, but suffer our minds to be driven this way and that like a ship on a tempestuous sea. Ross is expanding Lady Macduff's words, lines 4-5, *supra*: "when our actions do not, Our fears do make us traitors." It is uncertain how "move" in line 22 should be construed. It is probably a substantive, standing for "movement." But it has been treated as a verb, implying violent agitation, and antithetically complementing "float."

To what they were before. My pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you!

L. MACD. Father'd he is, and yet he's fatherless.

ROSS. I am so much a fool, should I stay longer,
It would be my disgrace and your discomfort:

I take my leave at once. [Exit.

L. MACD. Sirrah, your father's dead: 30
And what will you do now? How will you live?

SON. As birds do, mother.

L. MACD. What, with worms and flies?

SON. With what I get, I mean; and so do they.

L. MACD. Poor bird! thou'ldst never fear the net
nor lime,

The pitfall nor the gin.

SON. Why should I, mother? Poor birds they are
not set for.

My father is not dead, for all your saying.

L. MACD. Yes, he is dead: how wilt thou do for a
father?

SON. Nay, how will you do for a husband?

L. MACD. Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

SON. Then you'll buy 'em to sell again. 41

28-29 *I am so much . . . your discomfort*] Ross fears he will burst into unmanly tears.

30 *Sirrah*] not uncommonly used by parents to their children. The expression is sometimes found in Elizabethan literature addressed to women.

34 *lime*] birdlime; glutinous stuff used in the snaring of birds. Thus the First Folio. The later Folios read *line*.

35 *gin*] trap.

36 *Poor birds . . . set for*] Traps are not set for poor and helpless (birds), but for the rich and powerful.

MACBETH

ACT IV

L. MACD. Thou speak'st with all thy wit, and yet, i'
faith,

With wit enough for thee.

SON. Was my father a traitor, mother?

L. MACD. Ay, that he was.

SON. What is a traitor?

L. MACD. Why, one that swears and lies.

SON. And be all traitors that do so?

L. MACD. Every one that does so is a traitor, and
must be hanged. 50

SON. And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?

L. MACD. Every one.

SON. Who must hang them?

L. MACD. Why, the honest men.

SON. Then the liars and swearers are fools; for there
are liars and swearers enow to beat the honest men and
hang up them.

L. MACD. Now, God help thee, poor monkey! But
how wilt thou do for a father? 59

SON. If he were dead, you'd weep for him: if you
would not, it were a good sign that I should quickly
have a new father.

L. MACD. Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!

Enter a Messenger

MESS. Bless you, fair dame! I am not to you known,
Though in your state of honour I am perfect.

47 *swears and lies*] commits perjury.

58 *monkey*] "ape" is more commonly found as a playful term of
endearment.

65 *Though in your state . . . perfect*] Though I am perfectly acquainted
with your honourable rank.

I doubt some danger does approach you nearly:
 If you will take a homely man's advice,
 Be not found here; hence, with your little ones.
 To fright you thus, methinks I am too savage;
 To do worse to you were fell cruelty, 70
 Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you!
 I dare abide no longer. [Exit.]

L. MACD. Whither should I fly?
 I have done no harm. But I remember now
 I am in this earthly world, where to do harm
 Is often laudable, to do good sometime
 Accounted dangerous folly: why then, alas,
 Do I put up that womanly defence,
 To say I have done no harm? — What are these faces?

Enter Murderers

FIRST MUR. Where is your husband?

L. MACD. I hope, in no place so unsanctified 80
 Where such as thou mayest find him.

FIRST MUR. He's a traitor.

SON. Thou liest, thou shag-ear'd villain!

FIRST MUR. What, you egg!
[Stabbing him.]

Young fry of treachery!

70 *To do worse to you . . . cruelty*] To do less than give you this note of warning were fierce cruelty.

82 *shag-ear'd*] Thus the Folios, for which most editors substitute *shag-haired*, a common epithet of abuse. "Shag-ear'd" probably means "with shaggy hair falling about the ears."

egg] Cf. *All's Well*, IV, iii, 233, where "egg" is used of a young girl.

SON. He has kill'd me, mother :
Run away, I pray you ! [Dies.
[Exit Lady Macduff, crying "Murder !"]
Exeunt murderers, following her.

SCENE III — ENGLAND

BEFORE THE KING'S PALACE

Enter MALCOLM and MACDUFF

MAL. Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there
Weep our sad bosoms empty.

MACD. Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal sword, and like good men
Bestride our down-fall'n birthdom : each new morn
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland and yell'd out
Like syllable of dolour.

MAL. What I believe, I 'll wail ;
What know, believe ; and what I can redress,
As I shall find the time to friend, I will. 10
What you have spoke, it may be so perchance.
This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,

4 *Bestride our down-fall'n birthdom*] Stand over and protect our ruined birthright. For the form "birthdom" cf. "kingdom" and "masterdom" (I, v, 68, *supra*).

8 *Like syllable of dolour*] Responsive cry of grief.

10 *to friend*] friendly, favourable.

Was once thought honest: you have loved him well;
He hath not touch'd you yet. I am young; but some-
thing

You may deserve of him through me; and wisdom
To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb
To appease an angry god.

MACD. I am not treacherous.

MAL. But Macbeth is.

A good and virtuous nature may recoil
In an imperial charge. But I shall crave your pardon;
That which you are, my thoughts cannot transpose: ²¹
Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell:
Though all things foul would wear the brows of
grace,

Yet grace must still look so.

MACD. I have lost my hopes.

MAL. Perchance even there where I did find my
doubts.

15-17 *You may deserve . . . god*] The Folios read *discern*, for which Theobald substituted *deserve*. The meaning of the passage seems to be "You may secure his favour by sacrificing me; and it is worldly wisdom to sacrifice a helpless creature in order to appease the wrath of a powerful being."

19-20 *may recoil . . . charge*] may swerve from virtue under the stress of a commission from high quarters.

21 *transpose*] interpret.

23-24 *Though all things . . . look so*] Though villainy at times counterfeits the appearance of virtue, yet virtue always wears its own gracious aspect (which should not be lightly suspected).

25 *Perchance . . . doubts*] Malcolm explains that his suspicions, which disappoint and discourage Macduff, arise from the latter's abandonment of wife and children.

MACBETH

ACT IV

Why in that rawness left you wife and child,
Those precious motives, those strong knots of love,
Without leave-taking? I pray you,
Let not my jealousies be your dishonours,
But mine own safeties. You may be rightly just, 30
Whatever I shall think.

MACD. Bleed, bleed, poor country:
Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dare not check thee: wear thou thy
wrongs;
The title is affeer'd. Fare thee well, lord:
I would not be the villain that thou think'st
For the whole space that 's in the tyrant's grasp
And the rich East to boot.

MAL. Be not offended:
I speak not as in absolute fear of you.
I think our country sinks beneath the yoke;
It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash 40
Is added to her wounds: I think withal
There would be hands uplifted in my right;
And here from gracious England have I offer
Of goodly thousands: but for all this,
When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,

26 *in that rawness*] in raw helplessness, without provision. Cf. *Hen.* V,
IV. i. 139: "their women *rawly* left."

27 *motives*] used of persons who excite affection.

29-30 *Let not . . . safeties*] Do not treat my suspicions as convicting you of dishonourable acts, but as precautionary reflections prompted by the calls of my own safety.

34 *The title is affeer'd*] The usurper's title is affirmed or confirmed. "Afeeer'd" is a technical term in law.

43 *gracious England*] Edward the Confessor, King of England.

Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
 Shall have more vices than it had before,
 More suffer and more sundry ways than ever,
 By him that shall succeed.

MACD. What should he be?

MAL. It is myself I mean: in whom I know 50
 All the particulars of vice so grafted
 That, when they shall be open'd, black Macbeth
 Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state
 Esteem him as a lamb, being compared
 With my confineless harms.

MACD. Not in the legions
 Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd
 In evils to top Macbeth.

MAL. I grant him bloody,
 Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
 Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
 That has a name: but there's no bottom, none, 60
 In my voluptuousness: your wives, your daughters,
 Your matrons and your maids, could not fill up
 The cistern of my lust, and my desire
 All continent impediments would o'erbear,
 That did oppose my will: better Macbeth
 Than such an one to reign.

MACD. Boundless intemperance
 In nature is a tyranny; it hath been

52 *open'd*] disclosed, discovered.

55 *confineless harms*] limitless sins.

58 *Luxurious*] Lustful, lecherous.

59 *Sudden*] Impetuous.

64 *continent*] restraining.

The untimely emptying of the happy throne,
 And fall of many kings. But fear not yet
 To take upon you what is yours: you may 70
 Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,
 And yet seem cold, the time you may so hoodwink:
 We have willing dames enough; there cannot be
 That vulture in you, to devour so many
 As will to greatness dedicate themselves,
 Finding it so inclined.

MAL. With this there grows
 In my most ill-composed affection such
 A stanchless avarice that, were I king,
 I should cut off the nobles for their lands,
 Desire his jewels and this other's house: 80
 And my more-having would be as a sauce
 To make me hunger more, that I should forge
 Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
 Destroying them for wealth.

MACD. This avarice
 Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root
 Than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been
 The sword of our slain kings: yet do not fear;
 Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will

71 *Convey*] Manage in secret. The word often had a sinister meaning.
 Cf. *M. Wives*, I. iii, 27: "*Convey*, the wise it call."

86 *summer-seeming lust*] lust with all the heat of summer (which is more
 or less ephemeral).

87 *The sword of our slain kings*] The means which has caused the slaughter
 of our kings.

88 *foisons*] plentiful harvests, abundance.

Of your mere own: all these are portable,
With other graces weigh'd.

90

MAL. But I have none: the king-becoming graces,
As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
I have no relish of them, but abound
In the division of each several crime,
Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth.

MACD. O Scotland, Scotland!

100

MAL. If such a one be fit to govern, speak:
I am as I have spoken.

MACD. Fit to govern!
No, not to live. O nation miserable!
With an untitled tyrant bloody-scepter'd,
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne
By his own interdiction stands accursed,
And does blaspheme his breed? Thy royal father

89-90 *all these are portable . . . weigh'd*] all these vices are tolerable, if
they be counterbalanced by other virtues.

92 *temperance*] self-restraint.

95-97 *but abound . . . ways*] but divide every sin into any number of com-
ponent parts, and commit every one of them separately.

104 *bloody-scepter'd*] wielding the sceptre of a usurper, who has gained
the throne by deeds of blood.

107 *interdiction*] condemnation.

108 *blaspheme*] slander.

MACBETH

ACT IV

Was a most sainted king: the queen that bore thee,

Oftener upon her knees than on her feet, 110

Died every day she lived. Fare thee well!

These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself

Have banish'd me from Scotland. O my breast,

Thy hope ends here!

MAL. Macduff, this noble passion,
Child of integrity, hath from my soul
Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts
To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Macbeth

By many of these trains hath sought to win me

Into his power; and modest wisdom plucks me

From over-credulous haste: but God above 120

Deal between thee and me! for even now

I put myself to thy direction, and

Unspeak mine own detraction; here abjure

The taints and blames I laid upon myself,

For strangers to my nature. I am yet

Unknown to woman, never was forsworn,

Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,

At no time broke my faith, would not betray

The devil to his fellow, and delight

No less in truth than life: my first false speaking 130

Was this upon myself: what I am truly,

Is thine and my poor country's to command:

111 *Died every day she lived*] A reminiscence of *1 Cor.*, xv, 31: "I die daily."

118 *trains*] devices, plots, traps.

120 *over-credulous haste*] over-hasty credulity.

Whither indeed, before thy here-approach,
 Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,
 Already at a point, was setting forth.
 Now we 'll together, and the chance of goodness
 Be like our warranted quarrel! Why are you silent?

MACD. Such welcome and unwelcome things at once
 'T is hard to reconcile.

Enter a Doctor

MAL. Well, more anon. Comes the king forth, I pray
 you? 140

DOCT. Ay, sir; there are a crew of wretched souls
 That stay his cure: their malady convinces
 The great assay of art; but at his touch,
 Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,
 They presently amend.

MAL. I thank you, doctor. [*Exit Doctor.*]

MACD. What 's the disease he means?

MAL. 'T is call'd the evil:

133 *thy here-approach*] The First Folio reads *they here approach*, which is obviously wrong. Cf. line 148, *infra*: "here-remain."

134 *Old Siward*] Son of Beorn, Earl of Northumberland. His daughter was Duncan's wife; he was therefore Malcolm's grandfather, though at V, ii, 2, *infra*, he is called Malcolm's uncle.

135 *at a point*] quite ready, equipped.

136-137 *and the chance . . . quarrel*] and may the chances of good success be as great as the good warrant or justice of our cause of quarrel.

142-143 *their malady . . . art*] their sickness is too much for the greatest endeavour of the medical art.

145 *presently*] immediately.

146 *the evil*] the king's evil or scrofula was long supposed to be cured by the touch of a king's hand. Edward the Confessor was credited with

MACBETH

ACT IV

A most miraculous work in this good king;
 Which often, since my here-remain in England,
 I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,
 Himself best knows: but strangely-visited people, 150
 All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
 The mere despair of surgery, he cures,
 Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
 Put on with holy prayers: and 't is spoken,
 To the succeeding royalty he leaves
 The healing benediction. With this strange virtue
 He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
 And sundry blessings hang about his throne
 That speak him full of grace.

Enter Ross

MACD. See, who comes here?

MAL. My countryman; but yet I know him not. 160

MACD. My ever gentle cousin, welcome hither.

MAL. I know him now: good God, betimes remove
 The means that makes us strangers!

ROSS. Sir, amen.

a rare power of healing this disease. The sovereigns of England practised this mode of relieving scrofula till the reign of Queen Anne.

148 *here-remain*] Cf. "thy here-approach" (line 133, *supra*).

149 *solicits*] prevails by force of entreating.

153 *a golden stamp*] Cf. *M. Wives*, III, iv, 16, "*stamps in gold*," i. e., coins. Each person touched for "the king's evil" received from the sovereign a gold coin.

154 *'t is spoken*] 't is said.

160 *My countryman*] Malcolm recognises Ross by his Scottish dress.

MACD. Stands Scotland where it did?

ROSS. Alas, poor country!

Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot
Be call'd our mother, but our grave: where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air,
Are made, not mark'd; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasy: the dead man's knell 170
Is there scarce ask'd for who; and good men's lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying or ere they sicken.

MACD. O, relation
Too nice, and yet too true!

MAL. What's the newest grief?

ROSS. That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker;
Each minute teems a new one.

MACD. How does my wife?

ROSS. Why, well.

MACD. And all my children?

ROSS. Well too. 177

MACD. The tyrant has not batter'd at their peace?

168 *rend*] Rowe's substitution for the Folio *rent*, which is, however, a recognised form of "rend."

170 *A modern ecstasy*] A commonplace display of emotion.

173 *or ere*] before.

173-174 *O, relation . . . Too nice*] A narrative too elaborate in detail.

175 *That of an hour's age . . . speaker*] The grief which is an hour old is out of date and stale, and would cause the speaker to be hissed off the stage.

177 *Well*] An equivocation. The word "well" was often used of the dead. Cf. *Ant. and Cleop.*, II, v, 32-33: "we use To say, the dead are *well*."

ROSS. No; they were well at peace when I did leave
'em.

MACD. Be not a niggard of your speech: how goes 't?

ROSS. When I came hither to transport the tidings,
Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumour
Of many worthy fellows that were out;
Which was to my belief witness'd the rather,
For that I saw the tyrant's power a-foot:
Now is the time of help; your eye in Scotland
Would create soldiers, make our women fight,
To doff their dire distresses.

MAL. Be 't their comfort
We are coming thither: gracious England hath
Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men;
An older and a better soldier none
That Christendom gives out.

190

ROSS. Would I could answer
This comfort with the like! But I have words
That would be howl'd out in the desert air,
Where hearing should not latch them.

MACD. What concern they?
The general cause? or is it a fee-grief
Due to some single breast?

183 *out*] in insurrection, in arms.

184 *was to my belief . . . rather*] attested to my mind the sooner.

188 *doff*] put off, divest themselves of.

192 *gives out*] announces, proclaims.

195 *latch*] catch, seize. Cf. *Sonnet* cxiii, 6, and note on *Tw. Night*, III, iii, 36.

196 *a fee-grief*] a private individual grief, a grief in single ownership. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, III, ii, 48: "a kiss in *fee-farm*."

ROSS. No mind that 's honest
But in it shares some woe, though the main part
Pertains to you alone.

MACD. If it be mine,
Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it. 200

ROSS. Let not your ears despise my tongue for
ever,
Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound
That ever yet they heard.

MACD. Hum! I guess at it.

ROSS. Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes
Savagely slaughter'd: to relate the manner,
Were, on the quarry of these murder'd deer,
To add the death of you.

MAL. Merciful heaven!
What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;
Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break. 210

MACD. My children too?

ROSS. Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found.

MACD. And I must be from thence!
My wife kill'd too?

ROSS. I have said.

MAL. Be comforted:
Let 's make us medicines of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief.

206 *quarry*] heap of slaughtered game.

209-210 *the grief . . . break*] a variant of Seneca's proverbial maxim
(*Hippolytus* 615): "Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent" (Light
cares speak, mighty ones are dumb).

MACBETH

ACT IV

MACD. He has no children. All my pretty ones?
Did you say all? O hell-kite! All?
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
At one fell swoop?

MAL. Dispute it like a man.

MACD. I shall do so; 220

But I must also feel it as a man:
I cannot but remember such things were,
That were most precious to me. Did heaven look on,
And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
They were all struck for thee! naught that I am,
Not for their own demerits, but for mine,
Fell slaughter on their souls: heaven rest them now!

MAL. Be this the whetstone of your sword: let grief
Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it.

MACD. O, I could play the woman with mine
eyes, 230

And braggart with my tongue! But, gentle heavens,
Cut short all intermission; front to front
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself;
Within my sword's length set him; if he 'scape,
Heaven forgive him too!

216 *He has no children*] Cf. Constance's remark to the legate Pandulph in *K. John*, III, iv, 91: "He talks to me that never had a son." Macduff's words seem, from the context, to relate to Malcolm here rather than to Macbeth, though more dramatic point would be given them if they could be applied to Macbeth.

218 *dam*] the word was not uncommonly applied to hens by Elizabethan writers.

220 *Dispute it*] Contend with your grief.

232 *all intermission*] all delay or pause.

MACBETH

235 *This tune goes manly*] Rowe's correction of the Folio reading *This time goes manly*, which is pretty certainly a misprint. For "tune" cf. I, iii, 88, *supra*: "To the selfsame *tune* and words." There are other instances of *time* being misprinted for *tune*. In *Hamlet*, III, i, 158, the Second Quarto reads *out of time* (for the Folio reading *out of tune*).

237 *Our lack . . . leave*] Nothing is needed now but to take leave of the king.

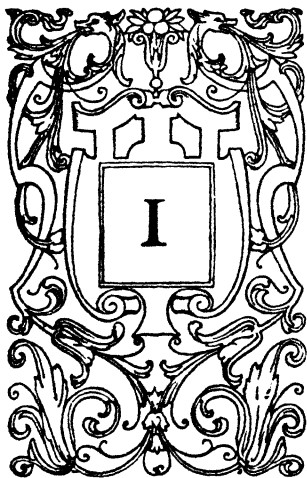
239 *Put on*] Instigate, incite.



ACT FIFTH.—SCENE I—DUNSLINANE
 ANTE-ROOM IN THE CASTLE

Enter a Doctor of Physic and a Waiting-Gentlewoman

DOCTOR



HAVE TWO NIGHTS
 watched with you, but can per-
 ceive no truth in your report.
 When was it she last walked?

GENT. Since his majesty went
 into the field, I have seen her
 rise from her bed, throw her
 nightgown upon her, unlock her
 closet, take forth paper, fold it,
 write upon't, read it, afterwards
 seal it, and again return to bed;
 yet all this while in a most fast
 sleep.

8

DOCT. A great perturbation in nature, to receive at
 once the benefit of sleep and do the effects of watching!

⁴ *Since his majesty . . . field*] Macbeth would seem to have taken com-
 mand of a force in the field against his rebellious subjects (cf. IV,
 iii, 185, *supra*), before he shut himself up in Dunsinane Castle.

In this slumbry agitation, besides her walking and other actual performances, what, at any time, have you heard her say? 13

GENT. That, sir, which I will not report after her.

DOCT. You may to me, and 't is most meet you should.

GENT. Neither to you nor any one, having no witness to confirm my speech.

Enter LADY MACBETH, with a taper

Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise, and, upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand close.

DOCT. How came she by that light? 20

GENT. Why, it stood by her: she has light by her continually; 't is her command.

DOCT. You see, her eyes are open.

GENT. Ay, but their sense is shut.

DOCT. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

GENT. It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands: I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

LADY M. Yet here 's a spot. 30

DOCT. Hark! she speaks: I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

5 *nightgown*] dressing-gown. Cf. II, ii, 70, *supra*.

10 *watching*] wakefulness.

12 *actual performances*] activities.

19 *stand close*] conceal yourself.

24 *sense is*] Rowe's emendation of the Folio reading *sense are*. "Corpse" is similarly treated as a plural in *1 Hen. IV*, I, i, 43.

LADY M. Out, damned spot! out, I say! One: two: why, then 't is time to do't. Hell is murky. Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account? Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

DOCT. Do you mark that?

39

LADY M. The thane of Fife had a wife; where is she now? What, will these hands ne'er be clean? No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.

DOCT. Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

GENT. She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: heaven knows what she has known.

LADY M. Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

50

DOCT. What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

GENT. I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

DOCT. Well, well, well, —

GENT. Pray God it be, sir.

DOCT. This disease is beyond my practice: yet I have

34 *Hell is murky*] Lady Macbeth expresses involuntary remorse for her crime, and dread of the eternal punishment which it invites.

42-43 *you mar . . . starting*] Lady Macbeth is recalling Macbeth's terror in the banquet scene.

54 *for the dignity . . . body*] even to clothe myself completely in the royal robe.

known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

59

LADY M. Wash your hands; put on your nightgown; look not so pale: I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave.

DOCT. Even so?

LADY M. To bed, to bed; there's knocking at the gate: come, come, come, come, give me your hand: what's done cannot be undone: to bed, to bed, to bed.

[*Exit.*

DOCT. Will she go now to bed?

GENT. Directly.

DOCT. Foul whisperings are abroad: unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets:
More needs she the divine than the physician.
God, God forgive us all! Look after her;
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And still keep eyes upon her. So good night:
My mind she has mated and amazed my sight:
I think, but dare not speak.

70

GENT. Good night, good doctor.

[*Exeunt.*

62 *on's grave*] of his grave.

63 *Even so?*] The doctor detects the causes of Lady Macbeth's perturbation.

64-65 *there's knocking at the gate*] Lady Macbeth recalls the knocking at the gate after Duncan's murder.

74 *annoyance*] violent injury.

76 *mated*] astounded, dismayed.

SCENE II — THE COUNTRY NEAR DUNSINANE

*Drum and colours. Enter MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS,
LENNOX, and Soldiers*

MENT. The English power is near, led on by Malcolm,
His uncle Siward and the good Macduff:
Revenge burn in them; for their dear causes
Would to the bleeding and the grim alarm
Excite the mortified man.

ANG. Near Birnam wood
Shall we well meet them; that way are they coming.

CAITH. Who knows if Donalbain be with his brother?

LEN. For certain, sir, he is not: I have a file
Of all the gentry: there is Siward's son,
And many unrough youths, that even now 10
Protest their first of manhood.

2 *uncle*] rightly "grandfather." See note on IV, iii, 134, *supra*.

3-5 *for their dear causes . . . man*] for their desperate wrongs (or desperate calls to vengeance), would impel the man stricken to death to respond to the warlike signal for carnage and horror. The language is strained. "The bleeding" is probably a substantive, standing for "the carnage of war," and paralleling "the grim alarm (of war)." "Mortified," though sometimes meaning "ascetic," apparently means here much the same as "dead."

8 *file*] list, catalogue, roll.

10 *unrough*] smooth-chinned, beardless. Cf. *Tempest*, II, i, 249-250:
"till newborn chins Be *rough* and razorable."

11 *Protest their first of manhood*] Make their earliest proof of manliness or manly courage.

MENT. What does the tyrant?

CAITH. Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies:
Some say he 's mad; others, that lesser hate him,
Do call it valiant fury: but, for certain,
He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause
Within the belt of rule.

ANG. Now does he feel
His secret murders sticking on his hands;
Now *minutely revolts upbraid his faith-breach*;
Those he commands move only in command,
Nothing in love: now does he feel his title
Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
Upon a dwarfish thief.

20

MENT. Who then shall blame
His pester'd senses to recoil and start,
When all that is within him does condemn
Itself for being there?

CAITH. Well, march we on,
To give obedience where 't is truly owed:
Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal,
And with him pour we, in our country's purge,
Each drop of us.

15 *his distemper'd cause*] the party or body of men supporting his tainted cause.

18 *minutely*] every instant.

23 *pester'd*] harassed, hampered, embarrassed.

24-25 *When all . . . there?*] When all the faculties of his mind are involved in self-condemnation.

27-28 *the medicine . . . with him*] "Medicine" here stands for the "doctor of medicine" the physician, like the French "médecin."

ACT V

LEN.

A ROOM IN THE CASTLE

MACB. Bring me no more reports; let them fly all:

Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane

I cannot taint with fear. What 's the boy Malcolm?

Was he not born of woman? The spirits that know

All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus:

“Fear not, Macbeth; no man ¹ that ’s born of woman

Shall e'er have power upon thee." Then fly, false
thanes,

And mingle with the English epicures:

The mind I sway by and the heart I bear

Shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear. 10

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon!

Where got'st thou that goose look?

3 *taint*] be infected. Cf. *Tw. Night*, III, iv, 125: "lest the device take air
and *taint*."

8 *epicures*] gluttons; a common reproach, according to Holinshed, levelled by the Scots against the English.

10 *sag*] droop. The word is still used of timber or iron supports in building operations, which fail to keep their place.

11 *cream-faced*] Cf. line 17, *infra*: *whey-face*.

SERV. There is ten thousand —

MACB. Geese, villain?

SERV. Soldiers, sir.

MACB. Go prick thy face and over-red thy fear,
Thou lily-liver'd boy. What soldiers, patch?
Death of thy soul! those linen cheeks of thine
Are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, whey-face?

SERV. The English force, so please you.

MACB. Take thy face hence. [Exit Servant.]

Seyton! — I am sick at heart,

When I behold — Seyton, I say! — This push 20
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.
I have lived long enough: my way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf,

15 *patch*] fool; often used of incompetent household servants. Cf. *Merch.*
of Ven., II, v, 45: "The *patch* is kind enough."

20 *push*] dangerous emergency or crisis. Cf. *Wint. Tale*, V, iii, 129:
"upon *this push*."

21 *cheer . . . disseat*] Steevens read *disseat*, i. e., "unseat" for the
First Folio reading *disceat* and the later Folios, *disease*. All the
Folios read *cheer*, but many editors who retain *disseat* have adopted
chair for *cheer* as an intelligible antithesis. But Shakespeare
nowhere uses "chair" as a verb, and it is doubtful if it could
signify, as the present context would require, "keep enthroned."
Probably the passage means that this dangerous crisis will either
give me permanent comfort in security or overthrow me altogether.
Cf. the common explanation "good cheer!" i. e., take courage; be
of good comfort.

22 *my way of life*] Thus the Folios. Cf. *Pericles*, I, i, 54, "ready for the *way*
of life or death." Johnson's conjecture, *my May of life*, which
Steevens supported, is unnecessary.

23 *sear*] withered: often used of autumn leaves.

MACBETH

ACT V

And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.
Seyton!

Enter SEYTON

SEY. What 's your gracious pleasure?

MACB. What news more? 30

SEY. All is confirm'd, my lord, which was reported.

MACB. I'll fight, till from my bones my flesh be
hack'd.

Give me my armour.

SEY. 'T is not needed yet.

MACB. I'll put it on.

Send out moe horses, skirr the country round;
Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine armour.
How does your patient, doctor?

DOCT. Not so sick, my lord,

As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,
That keep her from her rest.

MACB. Cure her of that.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased, 40

27 *mouth-honour, breath*] Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, V, i, 141: "breathing courtesy."

35 *skirr*] scour. Cf. line 56, *infra*.

39 *Cure her*] Thus the Second and later Folios. The First Folio omits *her*.

40-45 *Canst thou not . . . heart?*] Cf. Spenser's *Amoretti* (1595), *Sonnet* 1,

MACBETH

DOCT. Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.

where a "leech" who offers the poet "fit medicines for his body's best relief" is addressed thus:

43 *oblivious*] causing forgetfulness.

48 *my staff*] my general's baton.

50-51 cast *The water*] a reference to the common method of medical diagnosis.

54 *Pull 't off*] Macbeth probably bids his armourer remove some part of his armour because it is wrongly put on.

55 senna] Thus the Fourth Folio. The First reads *Cyme* and the Second

Would scour these English hence? Hear'st thou of
them?

DOCT. Ay, my good lord; your royal preparation
Makes us hear something.

MACB. Bring it after me.

I will not be afraid of death and bane
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.

60

DOCT. [*Aside*] Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly draw me here. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV — COUNTRY NEAR BIRNAM WOOD

*Drum and colours. Enter MALCOLM, old SIWARD and his Son,
MACDUFF, MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, ROSS,
and Soldiers, marching*

MAL. Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand
That chambers will be safe.

MENT. We doubt it nothing.

SIW. What wood is this before us?

MENT. The wood of Birnam.

MAL. Let every soldier hew him down a bough,
And bear 't before him: thereby shall we shadow

and Third, *Caeny*. The drug was often called "sene" by Elizabethan writers, and was spelt in many other ways. "Cyme" of the First Folio is possibly a misprint for *Cynne* or *Synne*.

58 *Bring it after me*] another reference to the piece of armour, which Macbeth just ordered to be removed (cf. line 54, *supra*).

2 *chambers will be safe*] one's house will be free of Macbeth's spies. Cf. III, iv, 131, *supra*.

The numbers of our host, and make discovery
Err in report of us.

SOLDIERS. It shall be done.

SIW. We learn no other but the confident tyrant
Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure
Our setting down before 't.

MAL. 'T is his main hope: 10
For where there is advantage to be given,
Both more and less have given him the revolt,
And none serve with him but constrained things
Whose hearts are absent too.

MACD. Let our just censures
Attend the true event, and put we on
Industrious soldiership.

SIW. The time approaches,
That will with due decision make us know
What we shall say we have and what we owe.
Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate,
But certain issue strokes must arbitrate: 20
Towards which advance the war. [*Exeunt, marching.*]

6 *discovery*] the information retailed by Macbeth's scouts.

11-12 *For where . . . revolt*] Thus the Folios. The passage is obscure.
Johnson substituted *to be gone* for *to be given*. The meaning seems to
be wherever there is opportunity of desertion to be offered Macbeth's
soldiers, all ranks are bent on revolting from him.

14-15 *Let our just censures . . . event*] Let our judgments wait for the
actual event so as to be quite accurate. "Just" has a proleptic
force.

18 *What . . . we owe*] What we shall be able to claim to have of our own
and what we owe others; our rights or property and our duties.

19 *Thoughts speculative . . . relate*] Surmises and speculations only deal
with the uncertainties of hope.

SCENE V — DUNSINANE

WITHIN THE CASTLE

Enter MACBETH, SEYTON, and Soldiers, with drum and colours

MACB. Hang out our banners on the outward
walls;

The cry is still "They come:" our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn: here let them lie

Till famine and the ague eat them up:

Were they not forced with those that should be
ours,

We might have met them daring, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home. [*A cry of women within.*

What is that noise?

SEY. It is the cry of women, my good lord. [*Exit.*

MACB. I have almost forgot the taste of fears:

The time has been, my senses would have cool'd 10

To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair

Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir

As life were in 't: I have supp'd full with horrors;

Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,

Cannot once start me.

5 *forced*] reinforced.

6 *dareful*] full of defiance.

11-13 *my fell of hair . . . As life were in 't*] Cf. *Hamlet*, III, iv, 121-122:

"Your bedded *hairs*, like *life* in excrements, Start up and stand an end." "Fell of hair" means the "scalp." "A dismal treatise" means "a tale of suffering."

Re-enter SEYTON

Wherefore was that cry?

SEY. The queen, my lord, is dead.

MACB. She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day, 20
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life 's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

Enter a Messenger

Thou comest to use thy tongue; thy story quickly.

MESS. Gracious my lord, 30
I should report that which I say I saw,
But know not how to do it.

MACB. Well, say, sir.

MESS. As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move.

MACB. Liar and slave!

MESS. Let me endure your wrath, if 't be not so:

17 *should have died*] would have died (in due time).

21 *recorded time*] the records of time.

23 *dusty death*] death which brings all to dust.

Within this three mile may you see it coming;
I say, a moving grove.

MACB. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
Till famine cling thee: if thy speech be sooth, 40
I care not if thou dost for me as much.
I pull in resolution, and begin
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend
That lies like truth: "Fear not, till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane;" and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane. Arm, arm, and out!
If this which he avouches does appear,
There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.
I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun,
And wish the estate o' the world were now undone. 50
Ring the alarum-bell! Blow, wind! come, wrack!
At least we'll die with harness on our back. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI — DUNSINANE

BEFORE THE CASTLE

*Drum and colours. Enter MALCOLM, old SIWARD, MACDUFF, and
their Army, with boughs*

MAL. Now near enough; your leavy screens throw
down,
And show like those you are. You, worthy uncle,

40 *cling thee*] shrivel thee up. The word is still so used in provincial dialects.

42 *I pull in resolution*] I waver in courage. Thus the Folios. "Pull
in" means "rein in," "check," as of pulling in a horse.

50 *the estate o' the world*] the settled order of things.

52 *harness*] armour.

SCENE VII

MACBETH

Shall, with my cousin, your right noble son,
Lead our first battle: worthy Macduff and we
Shall take upon 's what else remains to do,
According to our order.

SIW. Fare you well.
Do we but find the tyrant's power to-night,
Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.

MACD. Make all our trumpets speak; give them all
breath,
Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death. 10
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

Alarums. Enter MACBETH

MACB. They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly,
But bear-like I must fight the course. What 's he
That was not born of woman? Such a one
Am I to fear, or none.

Enter young SIWARD

Yo. SIW. What is thy name?

MACB. Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.

Yo. SIW. No; though thou call'st thyself a hotter
name

Than any is in hell.

4 *first battle*] first battalion or squadron; the van of the army.

Sc. VII, 2 *fight the course*] technically used of a bout in bear-baiting when
the dogs are let loose on the bear.

MACBETH

ACT V

MACB. My name 's Macbeth.

YO. SIW. The devil himself could not pronounce a
title

More hateful to mine ear.

MACB. No, nor more fearful.

YO. SIW. Thou liest, abhorred tyrant; with my sword 10
I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

[They fight, and young Siward is slain.]

MACB. Thou wast born of woman.
But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
Brandish'd by man that 's of a woman born. *[Exit.]*

Alarums. Enter MACDUFF

MACD. That way the noise is. Tyrant, show thy face!
If thou be'st slain and with no stroke of mine,
My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.
I cannot strike at wretched kerns, whose arms
Are hired to bear their staves: either thou, Macbeth,
Or else my sword, with an unbatter'd edge,
I sheathe again undeeded. There thou shouldst be; 20
By this great clatter, one of greatest note
Seems bruited: let me find him, fortune!
And more I beg not. *[Exit. Alarums.]*

Enter MALCOLM and old SIWARD

SIW. This way, my lord; the castle 's gently render'd:
The tyrant's people on both sides do fight;

17 *kerns*] here loosely used for "boors," but properly "light-armed Irish foot-soldiers," as at I, ii, 13, *supra*.

22 *Seems bruited*] Seems indicated (by the noise).

24 *gently render'd*] peacefully surrendered.

SCENE VIII

MACBETH

The noble thanes do bravely in the war;
 The day almost itself professes yours,
 And little is to do.

MAL. We have met with foes
 That strike beside us.

SIW. Enter, sir, the castle.

[*Exeunt. Alarum.*]

SCENE VIII — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

Enter MACBETH

MACB. Why should I play the Roman fool, and die
 On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the gashes
 Do better upon them.

Enter MACDUFF

MACD. Turn, hell-hound, turn!

MACB. Of all men else I have avoided thee:
 But get thee back; my soul is too much charged
 With blood of thine already.

MACD. I have no words:
 My voice is in my sword, thou bloodier villain
 Than terms can give thee out! [*They fight.*]

29 *That strike beside us*] That miss their aim at us, fail to strike us.

1-2 *Why should . . . sword?*] a reference apparently to either Cassius
 or Brutus, who took their own lives in this fashion.

2-3 *whiles I see lives . . . them*] whilst I see living foes, I shall do better
 in cutting them about.

8 *terms can give thee out*] words can describe thee.

ACT V

And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
 Yet I will try the last: before my body
 I throw my warlike shield: lay on, Macduff;
 And damn'd be him that first cries "Hold, enough!"

[*Exeunt, fighting. Alarums.*

*Retreat. Flourish. Enter, with drum and colours, MALCOLM, old
 SIWARD, ROSS, the other Thanes, and Soldiers*

MAL. I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.

SIW. Some must go off: and yet, by these I see,
 So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

MAL. Macduff is missing, and your noble son.

ROSS. Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt:
 He only lived but till he was a man;
 The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd
 In the unshrinking station where he fought,
 But like a man he died.

SIW. Then he is dead?

ROSS. Ay, and brought off the field: your cause of
 sorrow

32 *the last*] the latter of the two alternatives, viz., of yielding to Macduff
 and of fighting him.

34 "*Hold, enough!*" the ordinary cry acknowledging defeat in a duel.

34 (Stage Direction) *Exeunt, fighting. Alarums*] Thus Pope. The Folio
 after *Alarums* adds *Enter Fighting, and Macbeth slain*, words which
 suggest that Macduff and Macbeth were intended to reappear on the
 stage together, and to bring their fight to a close with Macbeth's fall,
 in the sight of the audience. In any case Macbeth's body must have
 been quickly removed for the purpose of decapitation. All editions
 make Macduff enter anew with Macbeth's head, at line 53.

36 *Some must go off*] Some must die.

42 *unshrinking station*] exposed station where he fought without shrinking

MACBETH

ACT V

Must not be measured by his worth, for then
It hath no end.

SIW. Had he his hurts before?

ROSS. Ay, on the front.

SIW. Why then, God's soldier be he!
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so his knell is knoll'd.

MAL. He's worth more sorrow, 50
And that I'll spend for him.

SIW. He's worth no more:
They say he parted well and paid his score:
And so God be with him! Here comes newer comfort.

Re-enter MACDUFF, with MACBETH's head

MACD. Hail, king! for so thou art: behold, where
stands
The usurper's cursed head: the time is free:
I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's pearl,
That speak my salutation in their minds;
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine:
Hail, King of Scotland!

ALL. Hail, King of Scotland! [*Flourish.*]

MAL. We shall not spend a large expense of time 60

52 *parted well*] departed well, made a good end.

53 (Stage Direction) *with MACBETH's head*] Thus the Folios. Malone
added from Holinshed the words *on a pole*.

56 *thy kingdom's pearl*] the flower of the nobility. There is an implicit
allusion to the row of pearls which commonly encircled a king's
crown.

Before we reckon with your several loves,
And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,
Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland
In such an honour named. What 's more to do,
Which would be planted newly with the time,
As calling home our exiled friends abroad
That fled the snares of watchful tyranny,
Producing forth the cruel ministers
Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen,
Who, as 't is thought, by self and violent hands
Took off her life; this, and what needful else
That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace
We will perform in measure, time and place:
So thanks to all at once and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone.

70

[*Flourish. Exeunt.*]

70 *by self and violent hands*] Cf. *Rich. II*, III, ii, 166: "with *self and vain* conceit."

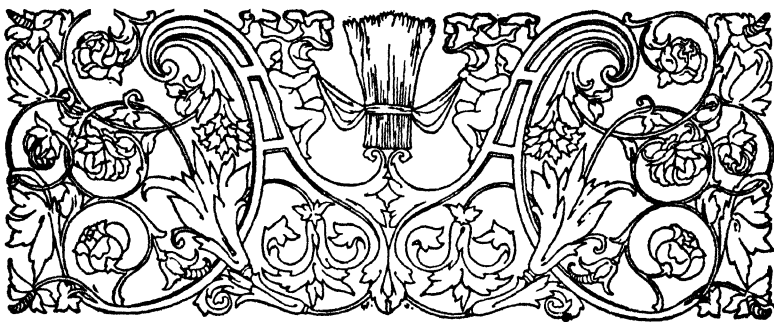
72 *by the grace of Grace*] by the mercy of Heaven. Shakespeare is fond of this verbal reduplication. Cf. *All 's well*, II, i, 159: "The great'st *grace* lending *grace*."

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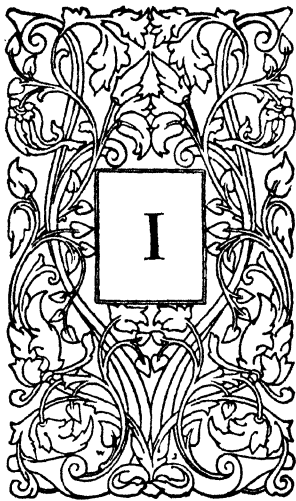
WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY WILLIAM ARCHER
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY SOLOMON J. SOLOMON

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INTRODUCTION



IT has been said — and I think the position a tenable one — that Shakespeare's supremacy is nowhere more manifest than in the instinct which guided the selection of his themes. The materials on which he drew were open to all the busy band of his contemporary playwrights ; but it was he, and no other, who laid hands upon the great type-tragedies in "Romeo and Juliet," "Hamlet," "Othello," "Macbeth," "King Lear." It is not merely in workmanship, but in the universal significance of their subject-matter, that these consummate embodiments of love, pessimism, jealousy, ambition, and ingratitude overtop all other works of their time. As we review the tragic themes treated by

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the lesser Elizabethans, does it ever occur to us to say of this one that Shakespeare ought to have preferred it to the myth of "Romeo and Juliet," of that other that he would have found it more inspiring than the story of "Macbeth," or of a third that he might have made of it something sublimer, more elemental, than "King Lear"? In no single instance, I venture to say, does such a thought suggest itself. Goethe, indeed, has shown that there were great possibilities in the theme of Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus"; but even in this case, though it is curious to speculate how Shakespeare might have dealt with the legend, we should be sorry, I believe, to exchange, say, "Hamlet" for the greatest "Faust" imaginable. For the rest, who ever thought of lamenting that Shakespeare had not chosen the subject of "Volpone" or of "The Duchess of Malfy," or of "The Changeling," or of "The Broken Heart," or of "The Maid's Tragedy," or of "A Woman Killed with Kindness," in lieu of any one of his great tragic themes? All these stories, and such as these, whatever their individual interest, are inferior in point of universal significance to those which Shakespeare has made his own. They rank at best with Shakespeare's second-rate subjects—the themes, for instance, of "Measure for Measure," "All's Well," or "Cymbeline"—while the first-rate subjects tower above them in virtue of an inherent greatness which Shakespeare alone perceived. The fact that some of these stories had already been treated by nameless playwrights in lost or forgotten plays does not in the least conflict with this view. It matters not a jot whether Shakespeare found his material

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in narrative or in dramatic form. The point is that he first perceived and brought to light the typical quality of these themes, and that no one else in his time, and only the very greatest in any other time, can be shown to have possessed a similar instinct for going straight to the heart of things, not only in the treatment, but in the selection, of their material. A further illustration of this gift may be found in his Roman tragedies. While Ben Jonson was content with elaborately reconstructing the melodramatic episodes of "Catiline" and "Sejanus," Shakespeare claimed as his own the world-historic crises associated with the names of "Julius Cæsar" and "Anthony and Cleopatra." One could almost imagine that the other playwrights purposely stood aside, and left him the great themes in right of undisputed sovereignty.

Is it wholly fanciful to conjecture a certain significance in the fact that, apart from the Roman trio, Shakespeare's great tragedies number just as many as the acts into which, accepting the classical tradition, he invariably divided his plays? At any rate, whether the number means anything or nothing, it is certain that this series of five plays presents an epitome of human life almost as systematic as that which Jaques outlines in the "Seven Ages." In "Romeo and Juliet" we have the budding instinct of love, in its first pathetic freshness, rushing to destruction through its own impetuosity. "Hamlet" shows the depression and disillusionment which so often beset a youth of delicate susceptibilities, on his first rude contact with a world full of cruelty, lust, and hypocrisy. In "Othello" we find maturity mated with youth, and tor-

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tured to death by the subtly-injected poison of jealousy. "Macbeth" shows us another of the calamities incident to ripe manhood—ambition, the morbid craving for power, fomented, as it normally would be, by that conjugal egoism which is all the fiercer for wearing a mask of self-devotion. And—"last scene of all that ends this strange eventful history"—"King Lear" presents to us the sombre tragedy of old age, deposition, supersession, neglect, filial ingratitude. Is not this a veritable encyclopædia of human experience, in its darker and more ominous phases? And is there any other Elizabethan tragedy which (even were its workmanship Shakespearian) could possibly claim admission to the series in virtue of the typical universality of its subject-matter?¹ All the leading figures of these plays have become terms of constant employment in the symbol-speech of the whole world.

We may regard "King Lear," then, as the last of a great cycle of tragedies. Let us note, too, that in all probability it was the latest in date of composition. This is not the place for complex chronological arguments: I am content to accept Mr. Sidney Lee's arrangement of the plays, which runs as follows: "Romeo and Juliet," early in the fifteen-nineties; "Hamlet," 1602; "Othello," 1604; "Macbeth," 1605; "King Lear," 1606. We know for certain that the tragedy of adolescence was by a long way the first of the series, and that the tragedy of early manhood came second; while the best evidence goes to

¹ If there be one, it is "Antony and Cleopatra," the counterpart to "Romeo and Juliet," contrasting with the passion of youth, the infatuation of middle age.

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show that the two tragedies of maturity stood third and fourth, and the tragedy of old age fifth and last. Can we regard this ordering of the mighty pageant as a mere chance? Does it not raise a presumption that the poet, who had mapped out the normal career of man, from a humouristic point of view, in the "Seven Ages," consciously devoted himself to the sequent composition of a cycle of type tragedies, or, as Balzac might have phrased it, a "Tragédie Humaine"? I do not suggest, of course, that he had this idea in mind from the moment he sat down to write "Romeo and Juliet"; but it may very well have arisen in his consciousness during the years when he was brooding over "Hamlet."

Even if this supposition be rejected as fanciful, the fact remains that "King Lear" is pre-eminently the tragedy of old age. There is only one other play in which the pathos of old age is treated with any approach to the like sublimity, and that is, of course, the "Œdipus Coloneus" of Sophocles. But how far less typical is the situation of Œdipus! His wretchedness arises, not from misfortunes to which old age is in the nature of things exposed — doting fondness, doting irascibility, the devouring egoism of the younger generation — but from strange and monstrous happenings in the past, which are so far from being generally characteristic of the human lot that they are conceivable only as the outcome of special malice on the part of the gods. We have none of us known an Œdipus, we have all of us, probably, seen re-enacted some part of the tragedy of Lear. The Père Goriot of Balzac is a Lear, not an Œdipus. It was to Shakespeare, not to

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Sophocles, that Turgenieff went for the key-note of his "King Lear of the Steppes." Looking at a deserted fortress lingering on in superfluous decrepitude, Henrik Ibsen wrote,

"I seem to see, as I gaze on thee,
King Lear on the storm-swept moorland."

Lear is the supreme symbol of a fate which does not — thank heaven! — overtake every one, but which may befall any one who survives his direct usefulness to the younger generation. He is the victim of an innate tendency in human — nay, in animal — nature, undisguised in the savage, more or less imperfectly corrected or dissembled in the civilised man. The fate of *Œdipus*, on the other hand, is unique. Its horror lies in its almost unthinkable remoteness from natural probability. I am not belittling the one play to magnify the other; I am not comparing them in respect of their whole poetic content. I am merely pointing out that King Lear is — what *Œdipus* is not — an example of one of the typical incidents of human destiny. He is the embodiment for all time of the tragic aspect of old age.

In this fact, rather than in any personal mood of the poet, I think we must look for the explanation of the chill and murky atmosphere, the desolate environment, in which the action is placed. That Shakespeare, as he grew older, saw more and more deeply into the tragic side of existence, is not only probable, but certain. At twenty-eight, his imagination, stimulated by experience, was adequate to the creation of "*Romeo and Juliet*"; it

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needed the accumulated observation and experience of fourteen more years to enable him to grapple with such a subject as that of "King Lear." But it is wholly unnecessary to conceive that any special mood of misanthropy, any personal disgust with life or alienation from his kind, inspired this or his other great tragedies. If there is any evidence of his having passed through such a mood, we must seek it in "Troilus and Cressida" and, more doubtfully, in "Timon of Athens" — certainly not in the play which is irradiated by the figure of Cordelia, and contains such an embodiment of steadfast nobility as Edgar, of loyal manhood as Kent, of tender faithfulness as the Fool. The atmosphere was prescribed by the subject. I do not mean merely that history — or what Shakespeare accepted as history — placed the saga of King Lear in a remote and barbarous antiquity. It is doubtful how far Shakespeare recognised this fact. He does not seem to have thought of Cornwall, Albany, Gloucester, or Kent as more distinctively barbarians than the barons in "King John," or even in later histories. Though the prevalent religion is paganism, the civilisation represented is simply that of feudal times, as it was conventionally understood on the Elizabethan stage. The gloom which hangs in the air of the play is begotten of the subject, not in its historical aspect, but in its essence as a phase of human destiny. What skies can be sad enough for the tragedy of old age, — what environment too sombre, what accessories too cruel? In all other dramas, however disastrous their issue, the protagonists have at any rate vigour, vitality,

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passion to sustain them. They grapple with their foes, they affront their destiny, on equal terms. They can, with Romeo, rejoice of their own free will to

“ Shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
From this world-wearied flesh ;”

or they can cry, with Macbeth,

“ Blow, wind ! come, wrack !
At least we'll die with harness on our back !”

But the tragedy of old age is rooted in decay, and can take no other form than that of monstrous cruelty. The decline of life, the waning of physical and mental power, the gradual encroachments of helplessness, are sufficiently melancholy of themselves, even with the alleviations of “honour, love, obedience, troops of friends.” But when these alleviations are denied — when insult takes the place of honour, and callousness of love — earth has no sadder spectacle to show. It was the poet's task to present this spectacle in its typical deformity, and he naturally created an environment in hideous harmony with the main theme. Hence the machinations of Edmund, the blinding of Gloucester, the savage rivalry of Goneril and Regan, the subordinate villainies of the Steward and the Captain. They keep the picture in tone. A world of ingratitude, cruelty, and crime was indispensable to the main purpose of giving its utmost poignancy to the pathos of old age. Theme for theme, the physical and moral climate of “King Lear” is as inevitable as the physical and moral climate of “Romeo and Juliet.”

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It must be considered, moreover, that to have made the hypocrisy and leagued ingratitude of Goneril and Regan a single blot upon an otherwise sunlit and kindly world would have been to divest it of typical quality and make of it one of those criminal aberrations that now and then startle the most civilised communities, and seem causeless as bolts from the blue. That was not Shakespeare's design. A chance enormity did not interest him. Such things he left to Webster and the melodramatists. It was the universal for which he cared. He wanted to show the fate of Lear as exceptional in degree, no doubt, but not in kind. The phenomenon with which he dealt — or rather the two complementary phenomena, the superfluity of age and the egoism of youth — belonged to the very constitution of things, the primal mechanism of Nature. The letter which Edmund forges in Edgar's name succinctly sets forth the motive of the whole action : " This policy and reverence of age makes the world bitter to the best of our times ; keeps our fortunes from us till our oldness cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny, who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffered." Regan, Goneril, and Edmund represent in its crudest form the principle of the survival of the fittest ; Cordelia and Edgar show that the entrance of moral ideas into the world has once for all modified the definition of true " fitness." When Edmund says, " Thou, Nature, art my goddess," he talks the language of misapplied Darwinism — of the evolutionism which fails to perceive that the purpose of Nature, the quantity and in-

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tensity of life towards which she is for ever striving, is better served by sympathy and humanity than by the relentless, untempered struggle for life which prevails in the Indian jungle or the African swamp. His goddess is "Nature, red in tooth and claw"; and it is the purpose of the play — or rather its effect, for Shakespeare knew these things by instinct, not by theory — to show that this is a self-defeating, self-devouring Nature, from which, somehow or other, a higher Nature has evolved itself. The same unbridled egoism which sends Lear out into the storm and betrays Gloucester to the brutal Cornwall, brings Goneril, Regan, and Edmund unfruitful and unpitied to their graves. But this principle could not be illustrated in a single example. It was necessary to show the higher instincts — the instincts of sympathy, gratitude, humanity, — outraged on every hand, in order to show how the insurgence of the lower instincts made, not for life, but for death, and so baulked the purpose of Nature. Thus the tragedy of old age became at the same time the picture of a recrudescence of animal egoism. Such a picture could not be exhilarating; but to find in it an expression of personal pessimism is to ignore at once the conditions and the issue of the case. To show humanity reacting at every point against cruelty — not only in Cordelia and Edgar, but in Kent, Albany, and Cornwall's servant — and to show cruelty barren, devastating, and feeding on itself, is surely not to express despair of the nature and destiny of man.

"But," it may be objected, "though inhumanity perishes, it perishes triumphant. The death of Goneril,

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Regan, and Edmund is balanced by the death of Lear, Cordelia, and Gloucester." Yes, because Shakespeare's philosophy was as remote from superficial optimism as from cankered pessimism. The death of Lear was a poetical necessity. What other end is possible to the tragedy of old age? To leave him alive — as Nahum Tate did, in the acting version which held the stage for a century and a half — was entirely to deprive the play of its typical quality. It was, moreover, to belittle all that had gone before; as Lamb saw when he wrote: —

"A happy ending! as if the living martyrdom that Lear had gone through — the flaying of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. . . . As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station — as if at his years, and with his experience, anything was left but to die."

If it be pessimism to own that old age must end in death, and that there are some calamities which human nature cannot — which it is well that it should not — survive, then, but not otherwise, is "King Lear" a pessimistic play. The same reasoning applies to the death of Gloucester, but not to the killing of Cordelia. For that, it seems to me, there is no philosophic necessity. The play, as a symbol, could not be called incomplete without it. Why, then, is she doomed to die? For a purely dramatic reason, I take it — namely that Lear's death, without hers, would be at once less affecting and less obviously necessary. The poet wanted to give Lear a great "pathos scene" — in the antique sense of the term — and at the same time to break the last tie that attached

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him to life. Though not inevitable, then, the death of Cordelia is by no means arbitrary or dragged-in. It may rather be called one of the probable incidents of the theme. How often do we see the Lears of the real world in child-like dependence on a Cordelia! And how often is the extinction of the young life the signal for the flickering-out of the old! Here again, as compared with the "Ædipus Coloneus," "King Lear" would seem to rank in a more consummate and universal sense as the tragedy of old age. Cordelia dies, Antigone survives.

It is always important, in studying Shakespeare's intentions in any particular play, to discriminate between those parts of it which he simply accepted from his sources, and those which he added and adapted of his own initiative. The suggestion that he deliberately purposed to make "King Lear" the typical close of what may be called a tragic Seven Ages—or rather Five Ages—series, is strengthened when we find that the fatal issue of the story is of his own invention. "Romeo and Juliet," "Hamlet," "Othello," and "Macbeth," were all ready-made tragedies as they came to his hand; "King Lear" was a romance which, in the face of numerous authorities, he turned into a tragedy. The story must have been known to him in at least four variants: in the prose of Holinshed, in the verse of "A Mirour for Magistrates" and of "The Faery Queen," and in the dramatic form given it by the nameless author of "The True Chronicle Historie of King Leir and his Three Daughters." In all of these versions—and indeed in all versions of the story except the ballad in Percy's "Reliques,"

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which is probably of later date than the play — Lear and Cordelia are victorious, and spend several prosperous years after the unhappy episode is ended. Shakespeare, on the other hand, was determined that it should be no episode, but a catastrophe, a conclusion. A romance with a “happy ending,” such as he afterwards produced in “Cymbeline” and “The Winter’s Tale” — such as actually, in Nahum Tate’s version, supplanted “Lear” itself — would doubtless have been more popular from the first. But it did not suit his purpose. In his mind — so I suggest — the play did not stand alone, an independent entity, but was part of a great whole. He wanted a fifth act for his “Tragédie Humaine” and he saw it in the story of Lear. He remembered, too, that in Sidney’s “Arcadia” there occurred a very similar story of a Laphlagonian king who, “drunk in his affection to an unlawful and unnatural son, suffered himself so to be governed by him that ere he was aware he had left himself nothing but the name of a king; which the son shortly wearying of too, with many indignities he threw the father out of his seat and put out his eyes.” This second example of the barbarity of the younger to the older generation Shakespeare indissolubly welded with the first. He added, of his own motive, that crowning incident in the tragedy of old — enfeeblement of intellect, delusion, madness. The tempest of the brain he accompanied and intensified by a tempest of the elements, of which, again, there was no hint in his sources. And thus, by selection and amplification, he built up the giant edifice of this terrible last act to the drama of human life.

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That the theme of "King Lear" was originally a folk-tale there can be little doubt. The three daughters — the two elder wicked and the youngest virtuous — belong unmistakably to popular tradition. Indeed a variant of the tale survives — mixed up with the "Cinderella" theme — in the Suffolk story of "Cap o' Rushes."¹ In this version the Cordelia-sister, when asked by her father how much she loves him, replies, "I love you as fresh meat loves salt"; and, being disowned on account of this seemingly inadequate answer, contrives, by serving up a dinner of entirely unsalted meat, to convince the offended parent that her figure of speech was really very much to the point. When the tale passed into what was accepted as serious history, the compilers did their best to rationalise it. According to Holinshed, for example, Lear gave up only half his kingdom to the husbands of Goneril and Regan; and they, after a considerable time, "thinking long ere the government of the land did come to their hands, arose against him in armour, and reft from him the governance of the whole." In "A Mirour for Magistrates," Lear disinherits Cordelia for her supposed coldness towards him, but the partition of the kingdom is forced upon him by the rebellion of his British sons-in-law. In Spenser, who tells the story very briefly, the division of the kingdom is to take place immediately, but it is to be an equal division, and there is no suggestion that the daughter who is loudest in her protestations of love is to have the largest share. In the old play of "King Leir," Skalliger, an evil-minded noble, suggests the divi-

¹ See "English Fairy Tales," collected by Joseph Jacobs. London, 1890, p. 51.

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sion of the kingdom in proportion to the professions of love ; but Leir expressly disclaims any such design. On the other hand he provides himself with an ingenious motive for putting his daughters' affection to the test. Cordella — it was Spenser who first called her Cordelia — is altogether indisposed to marriage ; and Leir, never doubting that she will outbid her sisters in vehemence of protestation, intends “to take her at the vantage” and ask her to make good her professions by marrying the man whom he shall choose for her —

“Even as she doth protest she loves me best,
He say, Then, daughter, graunt me one request,
To shew thou lovest me as thy sisters doe,
Accept a husband, whom myselfe will woo.”

This is not a very brilliant device ; but it shows that the dramatist was alive to the absurdity of the old King's conduct, and wanted to soften it down. In short, all the authorities with whom Shakespeare must have been acquainted¹ tried, in a greater or less degree, to dress up the fairy tale in a disguise of historic or dramatic plausibility.

Now it is curious, and not easily explicable, that Shakespeare should have rejected all rationalising of the story, and gone out of his way, it would seem, to thrust the fairy-tale element into the foreground. The necessity for dramatic compression would, of course, lead him to prefer the version which made King Lear's transference of power immediate and complete ; and the putting up of the kingdom to a sort of auction, in which the

¹ There is no good ground for doubting that Shakespeare knew the old play.

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princesses should outbid one another in effusiveness, was a touch of senility (suggested, though not acted on, in the old play) that admirably accorded with his general design. But, having made King Lear conceive this plan, why should the poet at once proceed to show that the portions are predetermined, and the boasting-match an empty form? It is probable enough that Lear, nothing doubting that Cordelia's love will be the loudest, should mentally, or even on paper, have mapped out for her the largest share; but why should he reveal this fact by openly assigning their portions to Goneril and Regan before Cordelia has spoken? Dr. Bucknill has found in this inconsistency a proof that Shakespeare would have us regard Lear as mad from the outset; but in that case how is it that none of those around him notice his aberration? It cannot be urged that they do notice it, but are silent out of respect. Kent, far from being silent, actually declares that Lear is "mad," yet omits to call attention to this crowning proof of insanity. I have heard it ingeniously argued that dramatic effect, the rhetorical working-up of the scene, demanded that after each daughter's speech the King should instantly assign her her portion. The fact is surely the other way: the dramatic effect would be greatly heightened if the King listened with an inscrutable countenance to his daughters' protestations, and reserved to the last the apportionment of their dowers. But even if the dramatic-effect argument were good in itself, it would be a poor defence; for the effect which is attained at the cost of a glaring inconsistency is scarcely worth having. On the whole, I can-

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not but think that we have here one of those pieces of inexplicable incuriousness, not to say slovenliness, that we so often encounter in Shakespeare. Dr. Bucknill is probably right in supposing that Lear's failure to keep his counsel, his blurting out of the fact that he has mentally anticipated the result of the test, is to be taken as a symptom, if not of madness, at any rate of the forgetful impatience of senility ; but it is none the less a fault to have made so gross a self-contradiction pass unnoticed by all the bystanders.

The truth is, no doubt, that Shakespeare felt it impossible to dissemble the fairy-tale element in the groundwork of his play (the conduct of Cordelia being, indeed, as improbable as that of Lear) and thought it best to face the improbabilities and have done with them, as rapidly as possible. The first scene of " King Lear " is much more of a mere prologue than the opening passages of " Hamlet," " Macbeth," or " Othello." The abundance of rhyme in it may perhaps be taken as a confession of its more or less conventional character. It was a favourite principle of the late Francisque Sarcey that an audience has no right to cavil at a dramatist's preliminary assumptions, so long as the action he deduces from them is logical and interesting. Shakespeare seems to have anticipated this principle, and to have hastened through the preliminaries of " King Lear " in his impatience to get at the essential action. It will be noticed that the starting-point of the under-plot is also very lightly hurried over. Not only Gloucester, but the acute and capable Edgar, falls a victim with astonishing facility to the machinations of Edmund.

KING LEAR

Shakespeare probably felt that he had not space within the narrow limits of drama to go fully into these matters. He must state his assumptions briefly, and trust to the good-will of his audience to accept them. As for Edmund, he makes him adopt precisely the method of Iago, and achieve in about five minutes a triumph of perfidy which Iago needed two whole acts to carry through. Thus the preliminaries of the action are dismissed in two rapid scenes, making just half of the first act; and space is left for the leisurely development of the moral and psychological consequences.

It would be idle to repeat the eulogies passed by a thousand critics upon the great central scenes of the tragedy. Disquisitions upon Shakespeare's mastery of this or that branch of technical knowledge are always to be taken with reserve; but there is no shadow of doubt that he has indicated the progressive phases of Lear's insanity with an accuracy in which the scrutiny of experts can find no flaw. Equally certain is it that he discriminates with astonishing nicety between the real frenzy of Lear, the assumed idiocy of Edgar, and the professional and ironic insanity of the Fool. This symphony of madness is one of the most extraordinary inventions in literature; but it seems to me, I own, that Shakespeare paid dear for it in the inevitable frigidity of Edgar's ravings. Critics have objected, not without some reason, to the blinding of Gloucester, as an intolerable brutality. Shakespeare borrowed it from the "Arcadia" because he required, as a pendent to the calamity of Lear, another calamity comparable in magnitude and yet clearly differ-

INTRODUCTION

ent. Simply to turn Gloucester out of his castle and send him wandering would have been to perpetrate a tedious anti-climax ; so he accepted Sidney's suggestion, and made Gloucester's physical blindness the counterpart to the darkening of Lear's mental vision. But to explain his retention of this feature of the original story is not necessarily to justify the enactment of Cornwall's atrocity upon the open stage. The incident brings home to us once more the paradox of the Elizabethan audience — its power of accepting, and even demanding, in intimate juxtaposition, the most exquisite emanations of the human spirit and crude survivals of barbarism in language and manners.

The closing scenes of the play lack something of that unity of dramatic impulse which carries us forward so irresistibly in "Hamlet" and "Othello" ; but in pathos and sublimity they are peerless. If, as I have ventured to fancy, Shakespeare felt that in the conclusion of "Lear" he was ending, not this play alone, but a great tragic cycle — a processional pageant of human destiny — he certainly rose to the occasion with a mastery unexcelled in any earlier passage of the vast creation. Never before or since has the passing of old age been depicted with such grandeur of simplicity. By how many death-beds, to how many thousands of men and women, must Kent's immortal lines have recurred, as the consummate, the only possible, utterance of the emotion of the moment : —

"Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass ! he hates him
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer."

KING LEAR

Be it noted that it is of old age, and nothing else, that Lear dies. Encompassed by cruelty, in a time of bloody deeds, he has yet suffered no physical injury. He shows no symptom of actual disease ; he succumbs to sheer exhaustion of the vital forces. Shakespeare felt that dagger and bowl would here have been out of place. A violent death would have been as illogical as a "happy ending." He was writing the Tragedy of Eld, and to that there is but one conclusion. It is Nature herself that brings the quietus.

WILLIAM ARCHER.

KING LEAR

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ¹

LEAR, king of Britain.

KING OF FRANCE.

DUKE OF BURGUNDY.

DUKE OF CORNWALL.

DUKE OF ALBANY.

EARL OF KENT.

EARL OF GLOUCESTER.

EDGAR, son to Gloucester.

EDMUND, bastard son to Gloucester.

CURAN, a courtier.

Old Man, tenant to Gloucester.

Doctor.

Fool.

OSWALD, steward to Goneril.

A captain employed by Edmund.

Gentleman attendant on Cordelia.

Herald.

Servants to Cornwall.

GONERIL,	} daughters to Lear.
REGAN,	
CORDELIA,	

Knights of Lear's train, Captains, Messengers, Soldiers, and Attendants.

SCENE: *Britain*

¹ This play was first printed in Quarto in 1608, when two impressions were published, both with somewhat confused text. An improved version from a different transcript was supplied by the First Folio, which first divided the play into Acts and Scenes. Rowe first added a list of the "dramatis personæ" and indicated the general "Scene."

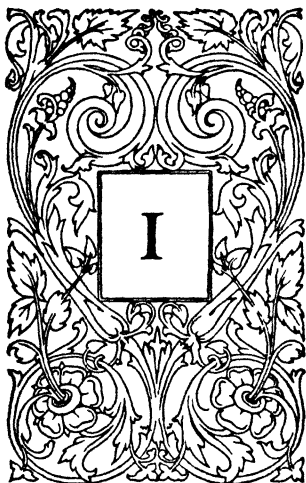


ACT FIRST — SCENE I

KING LEAR'S PALACE

Enter KENT, GLOUCESTER, and EDMUND

KENT



THOUGHT THE KING
had more affected the Duke of
Albany than Cornwall.

GLOU. It did always seem so
to us: but now, in the division
of the kingdom, it appears not
which of the dukes he values
most; for equalities are so
weighed that curiosity in neither
can make choice of either's
moiety.

KENT. Is not this your son,
my lord?

GLOU. His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge: I
have so often blushed to acknowledge him that now
I am brazed to it.

10

1 *more affected*] showed greater affection for.

KENT. I cannot conceive you.

GLOU. Sir, this young fellow's mother could: whereupon she grew round-wombed, and had indeed, sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault?

KENT. I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.

GLOU. But I have, sir, a son by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account: though this knave came something saucily into the world ²⁰ before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair; there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged. Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

EDM. No, my lord.

GLOU. My lord of Kent: remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

EDM. My services to your lordship.

KENT. I must love you, and sue to know you better.

EDM. Sir, I shall study deserving. ³⁰

GLOU. He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again. The king is coming.

5-6 *equalities* . . . *moiety*] There is such well-balanced equality in the distribution that close scrutiny cannot determine one portion to be any greater than the other. For *equalities*, the reading of the early Quartos, the Folios read *qualities*, which is plausible. "Moiety" commonly stands for "portion," not necessarily "half."

10 *brazed*] brazened, hardened.

17 *proper*] goodly, handsome.

19 *account*] esteem.

30 *study deserving*] study to be worthy (of your acquaintance).

31 *out*] abroad, away from home.

Sennet. Enter one bearing a coronet, KING LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, and Attendants

LEAR. Attend the lords of France and Burgundy,
Gloucester.

GLOU. I shall, my liege. [*Exeunt Gloucester and Edmund.*]

LEAR. Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.
Give me the map there. Know we have divided
In three our kingdom: and 't is our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from our age,
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburthen'd crawl toward death. Our son of Corn-
wall,

40

And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
We have this hour a constant will to publish
Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
May be prevented now. The princes, France and Bur-
gundy,

33 [*stage direction*] *Sennet*] A note of music commonly indicating the entrance or exit of important characters.

Attend the lords] Bid the lords attend upon us.

35 *darker*] more secret. The king has already indicated his general intention of distributing his dominions. He now discloses the hitherto concealed grounds and details of his procedure.

37 [*fast intent*] fixed resolve; "constant will" (line 42) has the same meaning. Cf. the Latin "*certa voluntas*."

38 [*from our age*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *of our state*.

39 [*Conferring . . . strengths*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *Confirming . . . yeares*. Cf. line 81, *infra*, where the Quartos again read *confirmed* for the Folio reading *conferr'd*.

KING LEAR

ACT I

Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
 Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,
 And here are to be answer'd. Tell me, my daughters,
 Since now we will divest us both of rule,
 Interest of territory, cares of state,
 Which of you shall we say doth love us most? 50
 That we our largest bounty may extend
 Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril,
 Our eldest-born, speak first.

GON. Sir, I love you more than words can wield the
 matter,
 Dearer than eye-sight, space and liberty,
 Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare,
 No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour,
 As much as child e'er loved or father found;
 A love that makes breath poor and speech unable;
 Beyond all manner of so much I love you. 60

COR. [*Aside*] What shall Cordelia do? Love, and be
 silent.

LEAR. Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,

49 *Interest of territory*] Profit derived from possession of territory.

52 *Where nature . . . challenge*] Where natural affection prefers a claim
 equally with merit, where the due of natural affection coincides with
 the due of merit.

54 *than words . . . matter*] than can be fully expressed in words.

55 *space and liberty*] fullest range of liberty.

57 *with grace*] endowed with grace.

59 *unable*] incapable, feeble.

60 *Beyond all manner of so much*] Beyond all such kind of comparisons.

61 *do*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *speak*, which is scarcely in
 keeping with Cordelia's mistrust of verbal professions.

With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,
 With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
 We make thee lady. To thine and Albany's issue
 Be this perpetual. What says our second daughter,
 Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

REG. I am made of that self metal as my sister,
 And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
 I find she names my very deed of love;
 Only she comes too short: that I profess
 Myself an enemy to all other joys
 Which the most precious square of sense possesses,
 And find I am alone felicitate
 In your dear highness' love.

70

COR. [Aside] Then poor Cordelia!
 And yet not so, since I am sure my love's
 More ponderous than my tongue.

LEAR. To thee and thine hereditary ever
 Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom,
 No less in space, validity and pleasure,

80

63 *with champains rich'd*] with open plains enriched.

68 *self*] self-same.

70 *my very deed of love*] the exact state of my own love.

73 *Which . . . possesses*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *professes* for *possesses*. *Square of sense* is difficult; *spirit* and *sphere* have been adopted by some editors for *square*. But Regan refers to the joys which are associated with the very quintessence of sensibility, and "the most precious square" may well mean "the most precious segment, the summit or acme."

74 *felicitate*] made happy.

76 *yet not so*] *sc.* poor in love.

77 *ponderous*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *richer*.

80 *validity*] value, worth.

Than that conferr'd on Goneril. Now, our joy,
 Although the last, not least, to whose young love
 The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
 Strive to be interest'd, what can you say to draw
 A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

COR. Nothing, my lord.

LEAR. Nothing!

COR. Nothing.

LEAR. Nothing will come of nothing: speak again.

COR. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave 90
 My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty
 According to my bond; nor more nor less.

LEAR. How, how, Cordelia! mend your speech a
 little,
 Lest it may mar your fortunes.

COR. Good my lord,
 You have begot me, bred me, loved me: I
 Return those duties back as are right fit,

81 *conferr'd*] See note on line 39, *supra*.

82 *the last, not least*] Thus the Quartos. The expression is proverbial.
 The Folios read wrongly *our last and least*.

82-84 *to whose young love . . . interest'd*] Thus the Folios, save that *interest'd* (*i. e.*, interested, concerned) is Jennens' change for the original *interest*, which may be a form of "interested." In the Quartos *in our deere loue* follows the word *least* without any stop, and the whole clause *to whose young love . . . interest'd* is omitted.

83 *milk*] the milk-producing pastures.

89 *Nothing will come of nothing*] Cf. the Latin proverb "Ex nihilo nihil fit." Lear repeats the phrase, I, iv, 42, *infra*.

92 *my bond*] my obligation of filial duty.

96 *Return . . . right fit*] Render those filial duties as they are rightly to be rendered.

Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
 Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
 They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
 That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
 Half my love with him, half my care and duty: 101
 Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,
 To love my father all.

LEAR. But goes thy heart with this?

COR. Ay, good my lord.

LEAR. So young, and so untender?

COR. So young, my lord, and true.

LEAR. Let it be so; thy truth then be thy dower:
 For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,
 The mysteries of Hecate, and the night;
 By all the operation of the orbs 110
 From whom we do exist and cease to be;
 Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
 Propinquity and property of blood,
 And as a stranger to my heart and me
 Hold thee from this for ever. The barbarous Scythian,
 Or he that makes his generation messes

100 *my plight*] my plighted troth.

109 *Hecate*] The goddess of night. The word is pronounced as a dissyllable. Cf. *Macb.*, II, i, 52 and note.

113 *Propinquity . . . blood*] Kinship and blood relationship.

115 *The barbarous Scythian*] The Scythians are again instanced as the extreme type of barbarism in *Tit. Andr.*, I, i, 131: "Was ever *Scythia* half so barbarous?"

116 *he . . . messes*] he that turns his progeny into messes of food, he that eats his children. Hakluyt quotes an account of such cannibal practices among the Tartars (*ed.* 1905, Vol. I, p. 51).

KING LEAR

ACT I

To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
Be as well neighbour'd, pitied and relieved,
As thou my sometime daughter.

KENT.

Good my liege, —

LEAR. Peace, Kent!

120

Come not between the dragon and his wrath.
I loved her most, and thought to set my rest
On her kind nursery. Hence, and avoid my sight!
So be my grave my peace, as here I give
Her father's heart from her! Call France. Who stirs?
Call Burgundy. Cornwall and Albany,
With my two daughters' dowers digest this third:
Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.
I do invest you jointly with my power,
Pre-eminence and all the large effects
That troop with majesty. Ourself, by monthly course,
With reservation of an hundred knights
By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode
Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain
The name and all the additions to a king;
The sway, revenue, execution of the rest,
Beloved sons, be yours: which to confirm,
This coronet part betwixt you.

130

122 *set my rest*] stake my all: a technical expression in the card game of "primero."

123 *Hence, and avoid my sight*] These words are clearly addressed to Cordelia, and not to Kent, as many editors suggest.

127 *digest*] absorb.

128 *marry her*] find her a husband.

130 *the large effects*] the spacious attributes or dignities.

135 *additions to a king*] titles of a king.

KENT. Royal Lear,
Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,
Loved as my father, as my master follow'd, 140
As my great patron thought on in my prayers, —

LEAR. The bow is bent and drawn; make from the shaft.

KENT. Let it fall rather, though the fork invade
The region of my heart: be Kent unmannerly,
When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old man?
Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak,
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's
bound,
When majesty stoops to folly. Reverse thy doom,
And in thy best consideration check
This hideous rashness: answer my life my judgement, 150
Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;
Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound
Reverbs no hollowness.

LEAR. Kent, on thy life, no more.

KENT. My life I never held but as a pawn
To wage against thy enemies, nor fear to lose it,
Thy safety being the motive.

LEAR. Out of my sight!

143 *fork*] arrow-head. Cf. *As you like it*, II, i, 24, "forked heads," i. e., arrow-heads.

148 *stoops . . . Reverse thy doom*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read
falls to folly reserve thy state (i. e., retain thy power).

149 *best*] most careful, most deliberate.

153 *Reverbs no hollowness*] Reverberates or proclaims no emptiness or insincerity.

155 *To wage*] To wager, stake, or hazard.

KING LEAR

ACT I

KENT. See better, Lear, and let me still remain
The true blank of thine eye.

LEAR. Now, by Apollo, —

KENT. Now, by Apollo, king,
Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.

LEAR. O, vassal! miscreant! 160

[Laying his hand on his sword.]

ALB. }
CORN. } Dear sir, forbear.

KENT. Do;
Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow
Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy doom;
Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,
I'll tell thee thou dost evil.

LEAR. Hear me, recreant!
On thy allegiance, hear me!
Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow,
Which we durst never yet, and with strain'd pride
To come between our sentence and our power, 170
Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,
Our potency made good, take thy reward.
Five days we do allot thee, for provision
To shield thee from diseases of the world,
And on the sixth to turn thy hated back

158 *blank*] The white mark forming the bull's eye of the target. Kent appeals to Lear to let him remain by him as the mark by which to guide the aim of his vision.

170 *power*] *sc.* to carry out our sentence.

172 *Our potency made good*] By way of proving the reality of our authority.

174 *diseases*] troubles, distresses. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *disasters*.

Upon our kingdom: if on the tenth day following
 Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,
 The moment is thy death. Away! By Jupiter,
 This shall not be revoked.

KENT. Fare thee well, king: sith thus thou wilt
 appear, 180

Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.

[*To Cordelia*] The gods to their dear shelter take thee,
 maid,

That justly think'st and hast most rightly said!

[*To Regan and Goneril*] And your large speeches may your
 deeds approve,

That good effects may spring from words of love.

Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu;

He'll shape his old course in a country new. [*Exit.*]

Flourish. Re-enter GLOUCESTER, with FRANCE, BURGUNDY, and
 Attendants

GLOU. Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

LEAR. My lord of Burgundy,

We first address towards you, who with this king 190
 Hath rivall'd for our daughter: what, in the least,

176 *tenth*] Thus all the early editions. Some modern editors substitute
seventh, which suits the context better.

181 *Freedom*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *Friendship*, perhaps
 a better antithesis to "banishment."

184 *approve*] prove, make good.

187 *his old course*] his career in old age.

188 GLOU. *Here's France . . . lord*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios give
 the line to CORDELIA.

191 *rivall'd*] competed.

KING LEAR

ACT I

Will you require in present dower with her,
Or cease your quest of love?

BUR. Most royal majesty,
I crave no more than what your highness offer'd,
Nor will you tender less.

LEAR. Right noble Burgundy,
When she was dear to us, we did hold her so;
But now her price is fall'n. Sir, there she stands:
If aught within that little seeming substance,
Or all of it, with our displeasure pieced,
And nothing more, may fitly like your grace,
She's there, and she is yours. 200

BUR. I know no answer.

LEAR. Will you, with those infirmities she owes,
Unfriended, new adopted to our hate,
Dower'd with our curse and stranger'd with our oath,
Take her, or leave her?

BUR. Pardon me, royal sir;
Election makes not up on such conditions.

LEAR. Then leave her, sir; for, by the power that
made me,
I tell you all her wealth. [*To France*] For you, great king,
I would not from your love make such a stray,

196 *hold her so*] hold her worthy of a great dowry.

198 *that little seeming substance*] that slight looking body.

199 *pieced*] supplemented.

204 *stranger'd . . . oath*] abjured by us, made a stranger to us, alienated
from us by oath.

206 *Election makes not up*] Choice makes no decision, no choice is possible.

209-210 *I would not . . . To match*] I would not neglect or ignore
your love to such an extent as to match.

To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you 210
 To avert your liking a more worthier way
 Than on a wretch whom nature is ashamed
 Almost to acknowledge hers.

FRANCE. This is most strange,
 That she, that even but now was your best object,
 The argument of your praise, balm of your age,
 Most best, most dearest, should in this trice of time
 Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle
 So many folds of favour. Sure, her offence
 Must be of such unnatural degree
 That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection 220
 Fall'n into taint: which to believe of her,
 Must be a faith that reason without miracle
 Could never plant in me.

COR. I yet beseech your majesty, —
 If for I want that glib and oily art,
 To speak and purpose not, since what I well intend,
 I'll do't before I speak, — that you make known
 It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,

214 *your best object*] the “delight of your eye”; *best* is omitted from the Folios; *object* stands for “object of attraction.” Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, IV, i, 167: “The *object* and the pleasure of mine eye.”

215 *argument*] theme.

220–221 *That monsters it, or . . . into taint:*] That befits a monster, or as makes it monstrous before your previously professed affection could have suffered taint. The Quartos read *Falne* for which the Folios substitute *Fall*.

227 *It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness*] Cordelia hyperbolically exaggerates the absurdity of the charges brought against her. She scornfully mentions the worst crimes possible.

KING LEAR

ACT I

No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,
That hath deprived me of your grace and favour;
But even for want of that for which I am richer, 230
A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
As I am glad I have not, though not to have it
Hath lost me in your liking.

LEAR. Better thou

Hadst not been born than not to have pleased me better.

FRANCE. Is it but this? a tardiness in nature
Which often leaves the history unspoke
That it intends to do? My lord of Burgundy,
What say you to the lady? Love's not love
When it is mingled with regards that stand
Aloof from the entire point. Will you have her? 240
She is herself a dowry.

BUR. Royal Lear,

Give but that portion which yourself proposed,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Duchess of Burgundy.

LEAR. Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm.

BUR. I am sorry then you have so lost a father
That you must lose a husband.

COR. Peace be with Burgundy!

Since that respects of fortune are his love,
I shall not be his wife.

230 *for want . . . richer*] The construction is obscure and the metre is irregular; "for which" must mean "for wanting which."

231 *still-soliciting*] constantly importuning.

239-240 *with regards . . . the entire point*] with scruples which are irrelevant to the essential or main point.

248 *respects*] considerations.

FRANCE. Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich being
 poor, 250
 Most choice forsaken, and most loved despised,
 Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:
 Be it lawful I take up what's cast away.
 Gods, gods! 't is strange that from their cold'st neglect
 My love should kindle to inflamed respect.
 Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance,
 Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France:
 Not all the dukes of waterish Burgundy
 Can buy this unprized precious maid of me.
 Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind: 260
 Thou lovest here, a better where to find.

LEAR. Thou hast her, France: let her be thine, for we
 Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
 That face of hers again. Therefore be gone
 Without our grace, our love, our benison.
 Come, noble Burgundy.

*[Flourish. Exeunt all but France, Goneril,
 Regan, and Cordelia.]*

FRANCE. Bid farewell to your sisters.

COR. The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes
 Cordelia leaves you: I know you what you are;

255 *inflamed respect*] increased regard.

258 *waterish*] well-watered.

259 *unprized*] priceless. "Unvalued" is similarly used for "invaluable"; cf. *Rich. III*, I, iv, 27: "*unvalued jewels*."

260 *though unkind*] though they are unkind, though they lack natural affection. Cf. *III*, iv, 70, *infra*: "his *unkind* daughters."

268 *The jewels*] Thus the early editions, for which Rowe substituted *Ye jewels*.

And, like a sister, am most loath to call 270
 Your faults as they are named. Use well our father:
 To your professed bosoms I commit him:
 But yet, alas, stood I within his grace,
 I would prefer him to a better place.
 So farewell to you both.

REG. Prescribe not us our duties.

GON. Let your study
 Be to content your lord, who hath received you
 At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,
 And well are worth the want that you have wanted.

COR. Time shall unfold what plaited cunning hides:
 Who cover faults, at last shame them derides. 281
 Well may you prosper!

FRANCE. Come, my fair Cordelia.

[Exeunt France and Cordelia.]

GON. Sister, it is not a little I have to say of what
 most nearly appertains to us both. I think our father
 will hence to-night.

272 *bosoms*] affections. Cf. V, iii, 50, *infra*, "the common *bosom*," i. e., the affection of the common people.

279 *well . . . wanted*] will deserve to suffer the want of that affection (from your husband) which you have shown yourself to be without (for your father). Thus the Folios. The Quartos awkwardly read *worth the worth for worth the want*.

280 *plaited*] twisted, crafty. The Folios read *plighted* and the Quartos *pleated*. "Plighted" is frequently found in the sense of "folded."

281 *Who cover . . . derides*] The old editions read *couers* for *cover* which is more grammatical. For *shame them* of the Quartos the Folios substitute *with shame*, which is difficult. The line seems a reminiscence of *Proverbs*, xxviii, 13: "He that *covereth* his sins shall not prosper."

REG. That's most certain, and with you; next month with us.

GON. You see how full of changes his age is; the observation we have made of it hath not been little: he always loved our sister most; and with what poor judgement he hath now cast her off appears too grossly. 291

REG. 'T is the infirmity of his age: yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself.

GON. The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then must we look to receive from his age, not alone the imperfections of long ingrafted condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them.

REG. Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him as this of Kent's banishment. 300

GON. There is further compliment of leave-taking between France and him. Pray you, let's hit together: if our father carry authority with such dispositions as he bears, this last surrender of his will but offend us.

REG. We shall further think on 't.

GON. We must do something, and i' the heat.

[*Exeunt.*

291 *grossly*] obviously, manifestly.

294 *The best . . . time*] The period of his life when he was in the prime of his bodily powers.

296 *long ingrafted condition*] disposition confirmed by long habit.

299 *unconstant starts*] fickle impulses.

302-304 *let's hit together . . . offend us*] let's join together in our course of action; if our father assert his authority in such headstrong temper as he now manifests, this final surrender to us of his kingdom will merely breed trouble for us.

306 *i' the heat*] Cf. the proverb "Strike while the iron's hot."

SCENE II—THE EARL OF GLOUCESTER'S CASTLE

Enter EDMUND, with a letter

EDM. Thou, nature, art my goddess; to thy law
 My services are bound. Wherefore should I
 Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
 The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
 For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
 Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?
 When my dimensions are as well compact,
 My mind as generous and my shape as true,
 As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
 With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base? 10
 Who in the lusty stealth of nature take
 More composition and fierce quality
 Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
 Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,

3 *Stand in the plague of custom*] Be subjected to the taint that custom or tradition lays on bastards.

4 *The curiosity . . . deprive me*] The scrupulousness or false delicacy of civilised society to disinherit me.

6 *Lag of a brother*] Lagging behind a brother in years; older than my brother.

base] "A base son" was a synonym for "a bastard." The words have no etymological connection. Cf. line 10, *infra*.

7 *my dimensions . . . compact*] my proportions are put together as well.

12 *More composition*] More effective blending.

14 *fops*] fools. Cf. line 113. *infra*: "the excellent *foppery* (*i. e.*, foolishness) of the world," and I, iv, 165, "foppish" (*i. e.*, foolish). Shakespeare also uses the verb "*fop*" in the sense of "dupe," "cheat"; cf. *Othello*, IV, ii, 195.

Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well then,
 Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
 Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
 As to the legitimate: fine word, "legitimate"!
 Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed
 And my invention thrive, Edmund the base 20
 Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:
 Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

Enter GLOUCESTER

GLOU. Kent banish'd thus! and France in choler
 parted!
 And the king gone to-night! subscribed his power!
 Confined to exhibition! All this done
 Upon the gad! Edmund, how now! what news?
 EDM. So please your lordship, none.

[Putting up the letter.

GLOU. Why so earnestly seek you to put up that
 letter?

EDM. I know no news, my lord.

GLOU. What paper were you reading? 30

21 *Shall top the*] Shall get above, surpass the. Thus Capell for the old
 reading *Shall to the*, which has been explained as "Shall come up to
 the," "get on a level with the."

23 *in choler parted*] departed in anger. There is no evidence in the previ-
 ous scene (cf. I, i, 301, *supra*), that the King of France and Lear de-
 parted otherwise than amicably. But the French king is called by
 Lear "hot-blooded" (II, iv, 211, *infra*).

24 *subscribed*] yielded (by a written surrender).

25 *Confined to exhibition*] Restricted to an allowance.

26 *Upon the gad*] Upon the spur of the moment.

EDM. Nothing, my lord.

GLOU. No? What needed then that terrible dispatch of it into your pocket? the quality of nothing hath not such need to hide itself. Let's see: come, if it be nothing, I shall not need spectacles.

EDM. I beseech you, sir, pardon me: it is a letter from my brother, that I have not all o'er-read; and for so much as I have perused, I find it not fit for your o'er-looking.

GLOU. Give me the letter, sir.

EDM. I shall offend, either to detain or give it. The contents, as in part I understand them, are to blame.

GLOU. Let's see, let's see.

EDM. I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my virtue.

GLOU. [*Reads*] "This policy and reverence of age makes the world bitter to the best of our times; keeps our fortunes from us till our oldness cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny; who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffered. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your brother,

EDGAR."

32 *terrible*] terrifying, implying terror.

38 *for your o'er-looking*] for your observation or inspection. Cf. V, i, 50, *infra*: "I will o'erlook thy paper."

44 *an essay or taste*] a trial or test.

45 *policy and reverence of age*] policy or practice of reverencing age.

46 *to the best of our times*] to the best years of our life. Cf. I, i, 294, *supra*.

47 *fond*] foolish.

Hum! Conspiracy! — “Sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue!” — My son Edgar! Had he a hand to write this? a heart and brain to breed it in? When came this to you? who brought it?

EDM. It was not brought me, my lord; there’s the cunning of it; I found it thrown in at the casement of my closet.

GLOU. You know the character to be your brother’s?

EDM. If the matter were good, my lord, I durst ⁶⁰ swear it were his; but, in respect of that, I would fain think it were not.

GLOU. It is his.

EDM. It is his hand, my lord; but I hope his heart is not in the contents.

GLOU. Hath he never heretofore sounded you in this business?

EDM. Never, my lord: but I have heard him oft maintain it to be fit, that, sons at perfect age, and fathers declining, the father should be as ward to the ⁷⁰ son, and the son manage his revenue.

GLOU. O villain, villain! His very opinion in the letter! Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested, brutish villain! worse than brutish! Go, sirrah, seek him; ay, apprehend him: abominable villain! Where is he?

EDM. I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please you to suspend your indignation against my brother till you can derive from him better testimony of his intent,

⁵⁹ *character*] handwriting.

⁶¹ *in respect of that*] in view of the fact that the matter is far from good.

you should run a certain course; where, if you violently proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would ⁸⁰ make a great gap in your own honour and shake in pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for him that he hath wrote this to feel my affection to your honour and to no further pretence of danger.

GLOU. Think you so?

EDM. If your honour judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, and by an auricular assurance have your satisfaction, and that without any further delay than this very evening.

GLOU. He cannot be such a monster —

90

EDM. Nor is not, sure.

GLOU. To his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him. Heaven and earth! Edmund, seek him out; wind me into him, I pray you: frame the business after your own wisdom. I would unstate myself, to be in a due resolution.

EDM. I will seek him, sir, presently, convey the business as I shall find means, and acquaint you withal.

79 *a certain course; where*] a safe or secure course; whereas.

84 *pretence of danger*] dangerous purpose or design.

91-93 *Nor is not . . . Heaven and earth*] These words only appear in the Quartos. They are omitted from the Folios. It has been argued that Gloucester's professions of affection for his son are hardly in keeping with his readiness to condemn him, and are best omitted.

94 *wind me into him*] steal or insinuate yourself into his confidence; "me" is the ethic dative.

95-96 *I would unstate . . . resolution*] I would give up my rank and estate in order to assure myself (of the facts).

97 *convey*] tactfully manage.

GLOU. These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects: love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide: in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked 'twixt son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there's son against father; the king falls from bias of nature; there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time: machinations, hollow-ness, treachery and all ruinous disorders follow us disquietly to our graves. Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall lose thee nothing; do it carefully. And the noble and true-hearted Kent banished! his offence, honesty! 'T is strange. [Exit. 112]

EDM. This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune — often the surfeit of our

99-100 *These late eclipses . . . portend no good*] Eclipses were almost universally held at the time to foreshadow calamity.

100-102 *though the wisdom . . . sequent effects*] though natural science or philosophy can account for these eclipses on scientific grounds, yet there is no mistaking their calamitous consequences.

105-109 *This villain . . . graves*] This passage is only in the Folios. It is omitted from the Quartos.

106-107 *falls from bias of nature*] runs counter to his natural disposition; "bias" is strictly the piece of lead which diverts the bowl from the straight course.

113 *foppery*] folly. See note on line 14, *supra*. Edmund in his cynical misanthropy condemns as an empty superstition the current faith in astrology.

114 *the surfeit*] the morbid excesses.

own behaviour — we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon and the stars: as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves and treachers, by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on: an admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail, and my nativity was under Ursa major; so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. Tut, I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing. Edgar —

127

Enter EDGAR

And pat he comes like the catastrophe of the old comedy: my cue is villanous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o'

118 *treachers*] traitors. Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *Trecherers*. The form "treacher" or "treachour" is not uncommon.

spherical predominance] an astrological term meaning much the same as planetary influence (line 119, *infra*).

120-121 *a divine thrusting on*] a supernatural impulse.

125 *Tut*] Thus Jennens. The Quartos read *Fut*, *i. e.*, "God's foot." The Folios omit the word.

128 *pat he comes . . . old comedy*] In the crude comedies of an old date the catastrophe was brought about in defiance of the natural order of things by the entry of a dominant character in quite unjustifiable circumstances. Cf. the "deus ex machina" of Horace's *Ars Poetica*, 191-192.

129-130 *Tom o' Bedlam*] A mad beggar-man, a half-witted vagrant; cf. "Bedlam beggars" II, iii, 14, *infra*, and note, and III, vii, 102.

Bedlam. O, these eclipses do portend these divisions!
fa, sol, la, mi.

131

EDG. How now, brother Edmund! what serious contemplation are you in?

EDM. I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.

EDG. Do you busy yourself about that?

EDM. I promise you, the effects he writ of succeed unhappily; as of unnaturalness between the child and the parent; death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient amities; divisions in state, menaces and maledictions against king and nobles; needless diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what.

EDG. How long have you been a sectary astronomical?

EDM. Come, come; when saw you my father last?

EDG. Why, the night gone by.

130 *divisions*] schisms, disunion with a quibbling suggestion of the word in the different sense of "musical modulations."

131 *fa . . . mi*] Edmund sings superciliously some notes of the scale.

The words are omitted from the Quartos.

137-138 *succeed unhappily*] have bad results.

138-144 *as of . . . Come, come*] This passage is only found in the Quartos, and is often treated as a spurious interpolation.

141 *diffidences*] breaches of confidence.

141-142 *dissipation of cohorts*] dispersal or dissolution of parties, societies, companionships. The phrase is difficult, and neither substantive is used by Shakespeare elsewhere. "Cohort" has no military significance here; it can only mean a band of persons united in any common cause.

143 *a sectary astronomical*] a devotee of astronomy.

KING LEAR

ACT I

EDM. Spake you with him?

EDG. Ay, two hours together.

EDM. Parted you in good terms? Found you no displeasure in him by word or countenance?

EDG. None at all.

150

EDM. Bethink yourself wherein you may have offended him: and at my entreaty forbear his presence till some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure, which at this instant so rageth in him that with the mischief of your person it would scarcely allay.

EDG. Some villain hath done me wrong.

EDM. That's my fear. I pray you, have a continent forbearance till the speed of his rage goes slower, and, as I say, retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my lord speak: pray ye, go; there's my key: if you do stir abroad, go armed.

161

EDG. Armed, brother!

EDM. Brother, I advise you to the best: go armed: I am no honest man if there be any good meaning towards you: I have told you what I have seen and heard; but faintly, nothing like the image and horror of it: pray you, away.

EDG. Shall I hear from you anon?

154-155 *that with . . . allay*] that with injury done your person it would scarcely subside.

157-163 *That's my fear . . . Brother, I advise you*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos omit the whole passage, between the words *That's my fear* and *Brother I advise you*.

157-158 *have a continent forbearance*] keep a well-controlled distance, a restrained aloofness, deliberately keep away (from him). Cf. line 152, *supra*: "*forbear his presence*."

SCENE III

KING LEAR

EDM. I do serve you in this business. *[Exit Edgar.*
 A credulous father, and a brother noble, 170
 Whose nature is so far from doing harms
 That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty
 My practices ride easy. I see the business.
 Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit:
 All with me's meet that I can fashion fit. *[Exit.*

SCENE III—THE DUKE OF ALBANY'S PALACE

Enter GONERIL and OSWALD, her steward

GON. Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding
 of his fool?

OSW. Yes, madam.

GON. By day and night he wrongs me; every hour
 He flashes into one gross crime or other,
 That sets us all at odds: I'll not endure it:
 His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us
 On every trifle. When he returns from hunting,
 I will not speak with him; say I am sick:
 If you come slack of former services, 10
 You shall do well; the fault of it I'll answer.

173 *practices*] machinations, plots.

175 *All with me's meet . . . fit*] With me every device which I can adapt
 to my purpose is fair game.

4 *By day and night*] Every hour.

5 *flashes*] breaks out. Cf. *Hamlet*, II, i, 33: "The *flash* and outbreak of
 a fiery mind."

KING LEAR

ACT I

Osw. He's coming, madam; I hear him.

[*Horns within.*]

GON. Put on what weary negligence you please,
 You and your fellows; I'd have it come to question:
 If he distaste it, let him to our sister,
 Whose mind and mine, I know, in that are one,
 Not to be over-ruled. Idle old man,
 That still would manage those authorities
 That he hath given away! Now, by my life,
 Old fools are babes again, and must be used 20
 With checks as flatteries, when they are seen abused.
 Remember what I tell you.

Osw. Very well, madam.

GON. And let his knights have colder looks among
you;

What grows of it, no matter; advise your fellows so:
 I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall,
 That I may speak: I'll write straight to my sister,
 To hold my very course. *[Exeunt.]*

13 *weary negligence*] listless inattentiveness. Cf. I, iv, 67, *infra*.

15 *distaste*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read more simply *dislike*.

17-21 *Not to be over-ruled . . . seen abused*] These lines are omitted from the Folios, and appear as prose in the Quartos. Line 21 (*With checks . . . abused*) means: With punishments or restrictions in the place of flatteries, when they (*i.e.*, the old fools) are seen to be misled or deceived (as to the true position of affairs).

25-26 *I would breed . . . speak*] These words which are also printed as prose in the Quartos are again omitted from the Folios.

SCENE IV — A HALL IN THE SAME

Enter KENT, disguised

KENT. If but as well I other accents borrow,
 That can my speech defuse, my good intent
 May carry through itself to that full issue
 For which I razed my likeness. Now, banish'd Kent,
 If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemn'd,
 So may it come, thy master whom thou lovest
 Shall find thee full of labours.

Horns within. Enter LEAR, Knights, and Attendants

LEAR. Let me not stay a jot for dinner; go get it
 ready. [*Exit an Attendant.*] How now! what art thou?

KENT. A man, sir. 10

LEAR. What dost thou profess? What wouldst thou
 with us?

KENT. I do profess to be no less than I seem; to
 serve him truly that will put me in trust; to love him
 that is honest; to converse with him that is wise and
 says little; to fear judgement; to fight when I cannot
 choose, and to eat no fish.

2 *defuse*] disorder, confuse. Kent is anxious to complete his disguise by
 adopting an accent which shall make his speech indistinct.

7 *full of labours*] ready for any service.

16 *to fear judgement*] to fear the day of judgment.

17 *to eat no fish*] Eating fish was held to be the sign of a Roman Catholic,
 of one disaffected to the government. Hence "to eat no fish" is
 equivalent to a profession of loyalty and orthodoxy. Cf. Marston's

KING LEAR

ACT I

LEAR. What art thou?

KENT. A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the king. 20

LEAR. If thou be as poor for a subject as he is for a king, thou art poor enough. What wouldst thou?

KENT. Service.

LEAR. Who wouldst thou serve?

KENT. You.

LEAR. Dost thou know me, fellow?

KENT. No, sir; but you have that in your countenance which I would fain call master.

LEAR. What's that?

KENT. Authority. 30

LEAR. What services canst thou do?

KENT. I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message bluntly: that which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in, and the best of me is diligence.

LEAR. How old art thou?

KENT. Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing, nor so old to dote on her for any thing: I have years on my back forty eight.

LEAR. Follow me; thou shalt serve me: if I like thee 40 no worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet. Dinner, ho, dinner! Where's my knave? my fool? Go you, and call my fool hither. [Exit an Attendant.]

Dutch Courtesan, I, ii, 19-20: "I trust I am none of the wicked that eat fish a' Fridays."

33 *curious*] elaborate, complex.

42 *knave*] lad; a common term of endearment, frequently used by Lear.

Enter OSWALD

You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter?

OSW. So please you, — *[Exit.*

LEAR. What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back. *[Exit a Knight.]* Where's my fool, ho? I think the world's asleep.

Re-enter Knight

How now! where's that mongrel?

KNIGHT. He says, my lord, your daughter is not well. 50

LEAR. Why came not the slave back to me when I called him?

KNIGHT. Sir, he answered me in the roundest manner, he would not.

LEAR. He would not!

KNIGHT. My lord, I know not what the matter is; but, to my judgement, your highness is not entertained with that ceremonious affection as you were wont; there's a great abatement of kindness appears as well in the general dependants as in the duke himself also 60 and your daughter.

LEAR. Ha! sayest thou so?

KNIGHT. I beseech you, pardon me, my lord, if I be mistaken; for my duty cannot be silent when I think your highness wronged.

LEAR. Thou but rememberest me of mine own conception: I have perceived a most faint neglect of late;

46 *clotpoll*] clodpate, blockhead.

53 *roundest*] bluntest.

67 *faint*] listless, languid. Cf. I, iii, 13, *supra*, "weary negligence."

KING LEAR

ACT I

which I have rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity than as a very pretence and purpose of unkindness: I will look further into't. But where's my fool? 70 I have not seen him this two days.

KNIGHT. Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away.

LEAR. No more of that; I have noted it well. Go you, and tell my daughter I would speak with her. *[Exit an Attendant.]* Go you, call hither my fool.

[Exit an Attendant.]

Re-enter OSWALD

O, you sir, you, come you hither, sir: who am I, sir?

Osw. My lady's father.

LEAR. My lady's father! my lord's knave: you whore-son dog! you slave! you cur! 80

Osw. I am none of these, my lord; I beseech your pardon.

LEAR. Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal?

[Striking him.]

Osw. I'll not be struck, my lord.

KENT. Nor tripped neither, you base foot-ball player.

[Tripping up his heels.]

LEAR. I thank thee, fellow; thou servest me, and I'll love thee.

KENT. Come, sir, arise, away! I'll teach you differ-

68-69 *mine own jealous . . . very pretence*] my own suspicious punctiliousness than as a deliberate design.

88 *differences*] differences of rank between master and man.

ences: away, away! If you will measure your lubber's length again, tarry: but away! go to; have you wisdom? so. *[Pushes Oswald out.]*

LEAR. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee: there's earnest of thy service. *[Giving Kent money.]*

Enter Fool

FOOL. Let me hire him too: here's my coxcomb.

[Offering Kent his cap.]

LEAR. How now, my pretty knave! how dost thou?

FOOL. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

KENT. Why, fool?

97

FOOL. Why, for taking one's part that's out of favour: nay, an thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou'lt catch cold shortly: there, take my coxcomb: why, this fellow hath banished two on's daughters, and done the third a blessing against his will; if thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb. How now, nuncle! Would I had two coxcombs and two daughters!

LEAR. Why, my boy?

FOOL. If I gave them all my living, I'd keep my coxcombs myself. There's mine; beg another of thy daughters.

LEAR. Take heed, sirrah; the whip.

109

FOOL. Truth's a dog must to kennel; he must be

93 *earnest*] earnest money, payment in advance.

94 *coxcomb*] the fool's cap.

103 *nuncle*] a contraction of "mine uncle." Fools usually addressed their superiors thus.

KING LEAR

ACT I

whipped out, when Lady the brach may stand by the fire and stink.

LEAR. A pestilent gall to me !

FOOL. Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

LEAR. Do.

FOOL. Mark it, nuncle :

Have more than thou showest,
 Speak less than thou knowest,
 Lend less than thou owest,
 Ride more than thou goest, 120
 Learn more than thou trowest,
 Set less than thou throwest;
 Leave thy drink and thy whore,
 And keep in-a-door,
 And thou shalt have more
 Than two tens to a score.

KENT. This is nothing, fool.

FOOL. Then 't is like the breath of an unfee'd lawyer,
 you gave me nothing for't. Can you make no use of
 nothing, nuncle ? 130

111 *Lady the brach*] a bitch hound. Thus Steevens. The Folios read *the Lady Brach*; the Quartos *Lady oth'e brach*. Cf. *1 Hen. IV.* III, i, 237: "I'd rather hear *Lady my brach* howl in Irish." For "brach," see III, vi, 68, *infra*.

119 *owest*] ownest, possessest.

120 *goest*] walkest on foot.

121 *trowest*] trustest, believest. The line means "Hear or learn more than you believe; don't believe all you hear." "Trow" is found in the sense both of "believe" and "know." But here the former sense suits the context.

122 *Set less than thou throwest*] A confused way of saying "Keep something in reserve when you stake a throw of the dice."

LEAR. Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

FOOL. [*To Kent*] Prithee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to: he will not believe a fool.

LEAR. A bitter fool!

FOOL. Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet fool?

LEAR. No, lad; teach me.

FOOL. That lord that counsell'd thee

To give away thy land,

140

Come place him here by me;

Do thou for him stand:

The sweet and bitter fool

Will presently appear,

The one in motley here,

The other found out there.

LEAR. Dost thou call me fool, boy?

FOOL. All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.

KENT. This is not altogether fool, my lord. 150

FOOL. No, faith, lords and great men will not let me; if I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't:

139-154 *That lord . . . they'll be snatching*] This passage is omitted from the Folios.

139 *That lord that counsell'd thee*] In the old play of *King Lear*, Lear is advised by a lord called Scalliger to divide his kingdom among his children. No such counsellor figures in Shakespeare's piece.

145 *motley*] the ordinary parti-coloured dress of the domestic fool.

152 *if I had a monopoly out*] if a patent of monopoly (in folly) had been granted me.

and ladies too, they will not let me have all the fool to myself; they'll be snatching. Give me an egg, nuncle, and I'll give thee two crowns.

LEAR. What two crowns shall they be? 156

FOOL. Why, after I have cut the egg in the middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i' the middle and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so.

[*Singing*] Fools had ne'er less wit in a year;
 For wise men are grown foppish,
 And know not how their wits to wear,
 Their manners are so apish.

LEAR. When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah? 169

FOOL. I have used it, nuncle, ever since thou madest thy daughters thy mother: for when thou gavest them the rod and puttest down thine own breeches,

153 *ladies too*] Thus some copies of the First Quarto, though most copies read with the Second and Third Quartos *and lodes too*.

160 *borest thine ass . . . back*] An allusion to Æsop's fable of the old man who tried to please everybody.

162 *like myself*] like a fool. The fool means that he is in earnest.

164-165 *Fools . . . foppish*] Fools never at any time enjoyed less recognition; for wise men are grown foolish. For "foppish" see *supra*, I, ii, 14, "fops," and 113, "foppery" (*i. e.*, foolishness).

170 *I have used it*] It has been my use or habit.

[*Singing*] Then they for sudden joy did weep,
 And I for sorrow sung,
 That such a king should play bo-peep,
 And go the fools among.

Prithee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy fool to lie: I would fain learn to lie.

LEAR. An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipped. 179

FOOL. I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are: they'll have me whipped for speaking true, thou'lt have me whipped for lying, and sometimes I am whipped for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind o' thing than a fool: and yet I would not be thee, nuncle; thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides and left nothing i' the middle. Here comes one o' the pairings.

Enter GONERIL

LEAR. How now, daughter! what makes that frontlet on? Methinks you are too much of late i' the frown. 189

FOOL. Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou hadst no need to care for her frowning; now thou art an O with-

173-176 *Then they . . . among*] A similar stanza ending:

“Some men for sudden joy gan weep
 But I for sorrow sing,”

is sung in Thomas Heywood's *Rape of Lucrece*, 1608. Heywood probably imitated Shakespeare here.

175 *play bo-peep*] play childish games.

187 *frontlet*] properly a tight band worn on women's foreheads, but here an incipient frown. Cf. *Zepheria* (1594), a collection of sonnets, xxvii,

14: “And veil thy face with frowns as with a *frontlet*.”

191-192 *an O without a figure*] a cipher.

KING LEAR

ACT I

out a figure: I am better than thou art now; I am a fool, thou art nothing. [*To Gon.*] Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue; so your face bids me, though you say nothing.

Mum, mum:

He that keeps nor crust nor crumb,

Weary of all, shall want some.

[*Pointing to Lear*] That's a shealed peascod.

GON. Not only, sir, this your all-licensed fool,

But other of your insolent retinue

200

Do hourly carp and quarrel, breaking forth

In rank and not to be endured riots. Sir,

I had thought, by making this well known unto you,

To have found a safe redress; but now grow fearful,

By what yourself too late have spoke and done,

That you protect this course and put it on

By your allowance; which if you should, the fault

Would not 'scape censure, nor the redresses sleep,

Which, in the tender of a wholesome weal,

Might in their working do you that offence

210

197 *Weary of all*] Rejecting from ennui all sustenance.

198 *a shealed peascod*] an empty husk, or pod without the peas; "shealed" is the old spelling of "shelled."

206-207 *put it on . . . allowance*] prompt or encourage it by your approval.

207-212 *which if you should . . . proceeding*] The construction is confused. The lines mean: Encouragement of this disorder on your part is a fault inviting censure, nor will needful remedial measures be spared; such measures, undertaken for the due care and protection of a healthy court or state, might in their operation do you an injury, which injury it would in other circumstances be reprehensible to inflict on you, but will in the necessities of the case be reckoned a prudent or discreet procedure.

Which else were shame, that then necessity
Will call discreet proceeding.

FOOL. For, you know, nuncle,

The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,
That it had it head bit off by it young.

So out went the candle, and we were left darkling.

LEAR. Are you our daughter?

GON. Come, sir,

I would you would make use of that good wisdom
Whereof I know you are fraught, and put away 220
These dispositions that of late transform you
From what you rightly are.

FOOL. May not an ass know when the cart draws the
horse? Whoop, Jug! I love thee.

LEAR. Doth any here know me? This is not Lear:
Doth Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes?
Either his notion weakens, his discernings
Are lethargied — Ha! waking? 't is not so.
Who is it that can tell me who I am?

215 *it head . . . it young*] in both cases "it" is the old form of "its."
The lines refer to the cuckoo's habit of laying her eggs in the spar-
row's nest. The sparrow is wont to hatch and nurture the cuckoo's
chicks, though they when they grow up often kill the bird which has
cherished them.

216 *darkling*] in the dark. The line is probably a colloquial catch-phrase.
221 *dispositions*] humours, caprices. Cf. line 292, *infra*.

224 *Whoop, Jug! I love thee*] Possibly the burden of an old song. "Jug"
was the pet name for Joan.

227 *notion . . . discernings*] mind . . . understanding.
weakens] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *weakness*.

FOOL. Lear's shadow. 230

LEAR. I would learn that; for, by the marks of sovereignty, knowledge and reason, I should be false persuaded I had daughters.

FOOL. Which they will make an obedient father.

LEAR. Your name, fair gentlewoman?

GON. This admiration, sir, is much o' the savour
Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you
To understand my purposes aright:
As you are old and reverend, you should be wise.
Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires; 240
Men so disorder'd, so debosh'd and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn: epicurism and lust
Make it more like a tavern or a brothel
Than a graced palace. The shame itself doth speak
For instant remedy: be then desired

231-234 *I would learn . . . [father]* These lines are only found in the Quartos. Their genuineness has been disputed. "Marks of sovereignty . . . daughters" would seem to mean "evidence offered by the sovereign powers of knowledge and reason would delude me into the belief that I was the father of daughters." Lear ignores the Fool's interruption "Lear's shadow," line 230, and the Fool retaliates by ignoring Lear's interpolated sentences, and by continuing his comment in line 234, "Which . . . father."

236 *This admiration*] This expression of astonishment.

239 *you should*] Thus the Second and Third Quartos. Other early editions omit *you*. Stevens would omit *you should*, and thus improve the metre.

241 *debosh'd*] an old spelling of "debauched."

243 *epicurism*] gluttony. Cf. *Macb.*, V, iii, 8: "the English *epicures*."

245 *graced*] dignified, decorous.

By her that else will take the thing she begs
 A little to disquantity your train,
 And the remainder that shall still depend,
 To be such men as may besort your age, 250
 Which know themselves and you.

LEAR. Darkness and devils!
 Saddle my horses; call my train together.
 Degenerate bastard! I'll not trouble thee:
 Yet have I left a daughter.

GON. You strike my people, and your disorder'd
 rabble
 Make servants of their betters.

Enter ALBANY

LEAR. Woe, that too late repent, — [To Alb.] O,
sir, are you come?
 Is it your will? Speak, sir. Prepare my horses.
 Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,
 More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child 260
 Than the sea-monster!

ALB. Pray, sir, be patient.

LEAR. [To Gon.] Detested kite! thou liest.
 My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
 That all particulars of duty know,
 And in the most exact regard support

248 *disquantity*] diminish the quantity of. Cf. line 283, *infra*, "dis-natured."

249 *still depend*] still be your dependants, still continue in your service. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, III, i, 5: "I do *depend upon* (*i. e.*, serve) the Lord."

261 *the sea-monster*] a vague reference to the sea-monster described in Ovid's *Metam.*, xi, 199, *seq.*, to which reference is made in *Merch. of Ven.*, III, ii, 55-57, and note.

KING LEAR

ACT I

The worships of their name. O most small fault,
 How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!
 That, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of nature
 From the fix'd place, drew from my heart all love
 And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear! 270
 Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in [*Striking his head.*
 And thy dear judgement out! Go, go, my people.

ALB. My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant
 Of what hath'moved you.

LEAR. It may be so, my lord.
 Hear, nature, hear; dear goddess, hear!
 Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
 To make this creature fruitful:
 Into her womb convey sterility:
 Dry up in her the organs of increase,
 And from her derogate body never spring 280
 A babe to honour her! If she must teem,
 Create her child of spleen, that it may live
 And be a thwart disnatured torment to her.
 Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth;
 With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks;
 Turn all her mother's pains and benefits

266 *The worships*] The honourable repute. Such a plural is often met with.

268 *like an engine*] like the rack.

280 *derogate*] degenerate or degraded.

283 *thwart disnatured*] perverse, lacking natural affection or instinct.

285 *cadent*] falling; a rare Latinism. Thus the Folios; the Quartos read hardly intelligibly *accent* or *accient*.

286 *mother's pains and benefits*] maternal anxieties and kind offices rendered by mothers to children.

To laughter and contempt; that she may feel
 How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
 To have a thankless child! Away, away! [Exit.

ALB. Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this? 290

GON. Never afflict yourself to know the cause,
 But let his disposition have that scope
 That dotage gives it.

Re-enter LEAR

LEAR. What, fifty of my followers at a clap!
 Within a fortnight!

ALB. What's the matter, sir?

LEAR. I'll tell thee. *[To Gon.]* Life and death!

I am ashamed

That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus;
 That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,
 Should make thee worth them. Blasts and fogs upon
 thee!

The untented woundings of a father's curse 300
 Pierce every sense about thee! Old fond eyes,
 Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck ye out
 And cast you with the waters that you lose
 To temper clay. Yea, is it come to this?
 Let it be so: yet have I left a daughter,

292 *disposition*] caprice. Cf. line 221, *supra*.

294 *at a clap*] at a stroke.

300 *untented*] not to be healed, incapable of yielding to the surgeon's curative "tent" or probe.

305 *Let . . . daughter*] The Quartos omit *Let it be so*: which is only in the Folios. *Yet have I left a daughter* is the Quarto reading for the Folio *I have another daughter*.

KING LEAR

ACT I

Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable:
 When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
 She'll flay thy wolvisish visage. Thou shalt find
 That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think
 I have cast off for ever: thou shalt, I warrant thee. 310

[Exeunt Lear, Kent, and Attendants.]

GON. Do you mark that, my lord?

ALB. I cannot be so partial, Goneril,
 To the great love I bear you, —

GON. Pray you, content. What, Oswald, ho!

[To the Fool] You, sir, more knave than fool, after your
 master.

FOOL. Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry; take the fool
 with thee.

A fox, when one has caught her,
 And such a daughter,
 Should sure to the slaughter, 320
 If my cap would buy a halter:
 So the fool follows after. *[Exit.]*

GON. This man hath had good counsel: a hundred
 knights!
 'T is politic and safe to let him keep
 At point a hundred knights: yes, that on every dream,

306 *comfortable*] comforting, giving comfort or sympathy.

322 *after*] The Elizabethans pronounced this word much like "slaughter"
 and "halter," words with which it rhymes here.

323-334 *This . . . unfitness, —*] These lines are omitted from the
 Quartos.

325 *At point*] Equipped.

Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,
 He may enguard his dotage with their powers
 And hold our lives in mercy. Oswald, I say!

ALB. Well, you may fear too far.

GON. Safer than trust too far:
 Let me still take away the harms I fear, 330
 Not fear still to be taken: I know his heart.
 What he hath utter'd I have writ my sister:
 If she sustain him and his hundred knights,
 When I have show'd the unfitness, —

Re-enter OSWALD

How now, Oswald!
 What, have you writ that letter to my sister?

Osw. Yes, madam.

GON. Take you some company, and away to horse:
 Inform her full of my particular fear,
 And thereto add such reasons of your own
 As may compact it more. Get you gone; 340
 And hasten your return. [*Exit Oswald.*] No, no, my lord,
 This milky gentleness and course of yours
 Though I condemn not, yet, under pardon,
 You are much more attask'd for want of wisdom
 Than praised for harmful mildness.

326 *buzz*] vague rumour, undertone of gossip.

331 *Not fear . . . taken*] Nor constantly fear to be overtaken by harms.

340 *compact it more*] strengthen it.

344 *attask'd*] (to be) taken to task, reproved. Thus some copies of the
 First Quarto. The word is found nowhere else. Other copies of the
 First Quarto with the Second and Third Quartos read *alapt*. The

KING LEAR

ACT I

ALB. How far your eyes may pierce I cannot tell:
Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

GON. Nay, then —

ALB. Well, well; the event. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V — COURT BEFORE THE SAME

Enter LEAR, KENT, and Fool

LEAR. Go you before to Gloucester with these letters.
Acquaint my daughter no further with any thing you
know than comes from her demand out of the letter. If
your diligence be not speedy, I shall be there afore you.

KENT. I will not sleep, my lord, till I have delivered
your letter. [*Exit.*]

FOOL. If a man's brains were in 's heels, were't not
in danger of kibes?

LEAR. Ay, boy.

FOOL. Then, I prithee, be merry; thy wit shall ne'er 10
go slipshod.

Folios have *at task*. The unknown word *alapt* may be connected
with "*alapat*," which appears in Melton's *Sixfold Politician* (1609,
page 185): "not with a wand to *alapat* and strike them."

349 *the event*] (we'll wait to see) how it turns out.

SCENE V, 4 *there*] at Gloucester; see line 1. The Duke of Cornwall
and Lear's daughter Regan are supposed to reside at Gloucester, and
the Earl of Gloucester to have in the neighbourhood of the city, a
castle, where the next two scenes take place.

8 *kibes*] chilblains.

10-11 *thy wit . . . slipshod*] "*slipshod*" means "in slippers," the natural
footgear for sore heels. The Fool means that Lear has no brains, and

LEAR. Ha, ha, ha!

FOOL. Shalt see thy other daughter will use thee kindly; for though she's as like this as a crab's like an apple, yet I can tell what I can tell.

LEAR. Why, what canst thou tell, my boy?

FOOL. She will taste as like this as a crab does to a crab. Thou canst tell why one's nose stands i' the middle on 's face?

LEAR. No.

20

FOOL. Why, to keep one's eyes of either side's nose, that what a man cannot smell out he may spy into.

LEAR. I did her wrong —

FOOL. Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

LEAR. No.

FOOL. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

LEAR. Why?

FOOL. Why, to put's head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case. 30

LEAR. I will forget my nature. — So kind a father! — Be my horses ready?

FOOL. Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars are no more than seven is a pretty reason.

in virtue of his quibbling association of brains with sore heels, he denies that Lear will have any need of invalid shoes.

14 *crab*] The "crabapple," commonly called "crab," had a very sour taste.

23 *I did her wrong*] Lear refers to his treatment of Cordelia.

34 *the seven stars*] the Pleiades. Cf. *1 Hen. IV*, I, ii, 13: "the moon and the seven stars."

KING LEAR

ACT I

LEAR. Because they are not eight?

FOOL. Yes, indeed: thou wouldst make a good fool.

LEAR. To take 't again perforce! Monster ingratitude!

FOOL. If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

LEAR. How's that?

40

FOOL. Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise.

LEAR. O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!

Keep me in temper: I would not be mad!

Enter Gentleman

How now! are the horses ready?

GENT. Ready, my lord.

LEAR. Come, boy.

FOOL. She that's a maid now and laughs at my departure

Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter.

[Exeunt.]

37 *To take 't again perforce*] No doubt Lear is meditating a forcible resumption of his royal power.

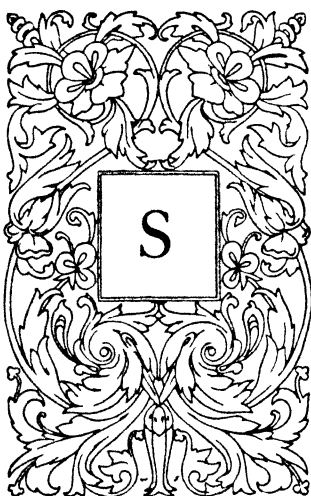
48-49 *She that's . . . cut shorter*] The Quartos make Lear go out before the fool speaks this couplet, which many critics regard as an actor's interpolation.



ACT SECOND — SCENE I
THE EARL OF GLOUCESTER'S CASTLE

Enter EDMUND and CURAN, meeting

EDMUND



AVE THEE, CURAN.

CUR. And you, sir. I have been with you father, and given him notice that the Duke of Cornwall and Regan his duchess will be here with him this night.

EDM. How comes that?

CUR. Nay, I know not. You have heard of the news abroad, I mean the whispered ones, for they are yet but ear-kissing arguments?

EDM. Not I: pray you, what are they?

CUR. Have you heard of no likely wars toward, 'twixt 10 the Dukes of Cornwall and Albany?

8 *ear-kissing arguments*] expressions that lightly touch the ear, topics merely spoken of in an undertone. Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *care-bussing*, "bussing" being an archaic word for "kissing."

KING LEAR

ACT II

EDM. Not a word.

CUR. You may do then in time. Fare you well, sir.
[Exit.]

EDM. The duke be here to-night? The better! best!
This weaves itself perforce into my business.
My father hath set guard to take my brother;
And I have one thing, of a queasy question,
Which I must act: briefness and fortune, work!
Brother, a word; descend: brother, I say!

Enter EDGAR

My father watches: O sir, fly this place; 20
Intelligence is given where you are hid;
You have now the good advantage of the night:
Have you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Cornwall?
He's coming hither, now, i' the night, i' the haste,
And Regan with him: have you nothing said
Upon his party 'gainst the Duke of Albany?
Advise yourself.

EDG. I am sure on't, not a word.

EDM. I hear my father coming: pardon me:
In cunning I must draw my sword upon you:
Draw: seem to defend yourself: now quit you well. 30

10 *toward*] imminent.

17 *of a queasy question*] of a delicate or ticklish character.

26 *Upon his party*] On the Duke of Cornwall's side, in that duke's support. Edmund is mystifying Edgar by putting him a question quite contradicting his first query: "Have you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Cornwall?" (line 23, *supra*).

27 *Advise yourself*] Recollect.

29 *In cunning*] By way of pretence.

SCENE I

KING LEAR

Yield: come before my father. Light, ho, here!
Fly, brother. Torches, torches! So farewell.

[*Exit Edgar.*]

Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion

[*Wounds his arm.*]

Of my more fierce endeavour: I have seen drunkards
Do more than this in sport. Father, father!
Stop, stop! No help?

Enter GLOUCESTER, and Servants with torches

GLOU. Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

EDM. Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword
out,

Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon
To stand's auspicious mistress.

GLOU. But where is he? 40

EDM. Look, sir, I bleed.

GLOU. Where is the villain, Edmund?

EDM. Fled this way, sir. When by no means he
could —

GLOU. Pursue him, ho! — Go after. [*Exeunt some
Servants.*] “By no means” what?

EDM. Persuade me to the murder of your lordship;
But that I told him the revenging gods

33 *beget opinion*] create a notion.

34–35 *I have seen . . . sport*] Reference is often made by the dramatists
to the practice of young gallants when inflamed with drink stabbing
themselves and drinking all manner of filth, by way of attesting their
devotion to their mistress.

'Gainst parricides did all their thunders bend,
 Spoke with how manifold and strong a bond
 The child was bound to the father; sir, in fine,
 Seeing how loathly opposite I stood
 To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion 50
 With his prepared sword he charges home
 My unprovided body, lanced mine arm:
 But when he saw my best alarum'd spirits
 Bold in the quarrel's right, roused to the encounter,
 Or whether gasted by the noise I made,
 Full suddenly he fled.

GLOU. Let him fly far:
 Not in this land shall he remain uncaught;
 And found — dispatch. The noble duke my master,
 My worthy arch and patron, comes to-night:
 By his authority I will proclaim it, 60
 That he which finds him shall deserve our thanks,
 Bringing the murderous caitiff to the stake;
 He that conceals him, death.

EDM. When I dissuaded him from his intent

49 *how loathly opposite I stood*] with what disgust I declared my
 opposition.

50 *motion*] a technical term in fencing for making an attack.

52 *lanced*] The Quartos have *lancht* or *launcht* which is an old spelling of
 "lanced." The Folios have *latch'd*.

53 *my best alarum'd spirits*] my finest courage roused to action.

55 *gasted by*] frightened by, aghast at. Cf. *Othello*, V, i, 106: "Do you per-
 ceive the *gastness* of her eye?"

58 *And found — dispatch*] An elliptical expression for "and when he is
found there shall be no delay; he shall be killed outright." Cf. line
 63, *infra*: "He that conceals him, death."

59 *arch*] chief.

And found him pight to do it, with curst speech
 I threaten'd to discover him: he replied,
 "Thou unpossessing bastard! dost thou think,
 If I would stand against thee, could the reposeure
 Of any trust, virtue, or worth, in thee
 Make thy words faith'd? No: what I should deny — 70
 As this I would; ay, though thou didst produce
 My very character — I'd turn it all
 To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice:
 And thou must make a dullard of the world,
 If they not thought the profits of my death
 Were very pregnant and potential spurs
 To make thee seek it."

GLOU. Strong and fasten'd villain!
 Would he deny his letter? I never got him.

[*Tucket within.*]

Hark, the duke's trumpets! I know not why he comes.
 All ports I'll bar; the villain shall not 'scape; 80

65 *pight . . . curst*] settled or pledged . . . vehement.

67 *unpossessing*] without the right of inheriting.

68 *reposeure*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *reposall* or *reposal*.

69 *virtue, or worth*] These words are co-ordinate with "reposeure of any trust."

70 *faith'd*] believed.

72 *character*] handwriting.

73 *suggestion . . . practice*] prompting or instigation . . . plotting or intrigue.

76 *pregnant*] obvious.

77 *Strong and fasten'd*] Resolute and determined.

78 *I never got him*] I never begot him; cf. III, iv, 142, *infra*, where "gets" is similarly used for "begets." Thus the Quartos. The Folios substitute less intelligibly *said he*?

KING LEAR

ACT II

The duke must grant me that: besides, his picture
I will send far and near, that all the kingdom
May have due note of him; and of my land,
Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means
To make thee capable.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, and Attendants

CORN. How now, my noble friend! since I came hither,
Which I can call but now, I have heard strange news.

REG. If it be true, all vengeance comes too short
Which can pursue the offender. How dost, my lord?

GLOU. O, madam, my old heart is crack'd, is crack'd! 90

REG. What, did my father's godson seek your life?
He whom my father named? your Edgar?

GLOU. O, lady, lady, shame would have it hid!

REG. Was he not companion with the riotous knights
That tend upon my father?

GLOU. I know not, madam: 't is too bad, too bad.

EDM. Yes, madam, he was of that consort.

REG. No marvel then, though he were ill affected:
'T is they have put him on the old man's death,
To have the waste and spoil of his revenues. 100
I have this present evening from my sister
Been well inform'd of them, and with such cautions

84 *natural*] used in the double sense of "illegitimate" and "possessed of good natural instincts."

85 *capable*] *sc.* of the succession.

97 *consort*] company, fellowship.

99 *put him on*] instigate him to attempt.

100 *the waste and spoil*] Thus some copies of the First Quarto. The Folios read *th' expence and wast*.

That if they come to sojourn at my house,
I'll not be there.

CORN. Nor I, assure thee, Regan.
Edmund, I hear that you have shown your father
A child-like office.

EDM. 'T was my duty, sir.

GLOU. He did bewray his practice, and received
This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.

CORN. Is he pursued?

GLOU. Ay, my good lord.

CORN. If he be taken, he shall never more 110
Be fear'd of doing harm: make your own purpose,
How in my strength you please. For you, Edmund,
Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant
So much commend itself, you shall be ours:
Natures of such deep trust we shall much need:
You we first seize on.

EDM. I shall serve you, sir,
Truly, however else.

GLOU. For him I thank your grace.

CORN. You know not why we came to visit you, —

REG. Thus out of season, threading dark-eyed night:
Occasions, noble Gloucester, of some poise, 120

106 *child-like*] filial.

107 *bewray his practice*] betray his plot. For "practice" cf. line 73, *supra*.

111-112 *make your own . . . please*] make your own arrangements, using
as you will my power to serve you.

119 *threading*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *threatning*. Cf. *Cor.*,
III, i, 124: "They would not *thread* (*i. e.*, pass through) the gates."
The image is from threading a needle.

120 *poise*] weight, moment.

KING LEAR

ACT II

Wherein we must have use of your advice:
 Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,
 Of differences, which I least thought it fit
 To answer from our home; the several messengers
 From hence attend dispatch. Our good old friend,
 Lay comforts to your bosom, and bestow
 Your needful counsel to our business,
 Which craves the instant use.

GLOU. I serve you, madam:
 Your graces are right welcome. [*Flourish. Exeunt.*]

SCENE II — BEFORE GLOUCESTER'S CASTLE

Enter KENT and OSWALD, severally

OSW. Good dawning to thee, friend: art of this house?

KENT. Ay.

OSW. Where may we set our horses?

KENT. I' the mire.

OSW. Prithee, if thou lovest me, tell me.

KENT. I love thee not.

123 *least*] The Cambridge editors substitute *least* for *lest*, which is the reading of some copies of the First Quarto. *Best* is the reading of other copies of the First Quarto and of all other early editions. *Best* makes very good sense. "From our home" in line 124 may well mean "away from home," "in absence from home."

124 *from our home*] For *home* some copies of the First Quarto read *hand*.

125 *attend dispatch*] wait to be dispatched.

1 *dawning*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *euen* (*i. e.*, evening). The affected phrase implies the time about daybreak.

OSW. Why then I care not for thee.

KENT. If I had thee in Lipsbury pinfold, I would make thee care for me.

OSW. Why dost thou use me thus? I know thee not. 10

KENT. Fellow, I know thee.

OSW. What dost thou know me for?

KENT. A knave; a rascal; an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; a lily-livered action-taking knave; a whoreson, glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one

8 *Lipsbury pinfold*] "Pinfold" is a synonym for "pound," a public enclosure for the confinement of stray cattle. Lipsbury is unexplained. It is perhaps a coined word sarcastically meaning "the lips." Kent might well threaten to get Oswald between his teeth.

14 *three-suited*] obviously a term of reproach, as in Jonson's *Silent Woman*, iv, 5, 10-11: "Thou wert a pitiful poor fellow, . . . and had nothing but *three suits* of apparel." Below, III, iv, 129, Edgar speaks rather contradictorily of "three suits to his back" as a sign of comparative prosperity. But Kent means here that a beggarly servitor like Oswald gives himself the airs of a man with a rich wardrobe.

14-15 *hundred-pound*] another term of reproach. Cf. Middleton's *Phanix*, IV, iii, 55-56: "How's this? am I used like a *hundred-pound* gentleman?"

15 *worsted-stocking*] Poor people wore worsted stockings, while the stockings of rich people were invariably of silk.

16 *action-taking knave*] one who resorts to legal action when assaulted instead of challenging an assailant to fight.

glass-gazing] surveying his person in a looking-glass.

superserviceable] one above his duties. Cf. IV, vi, 254. *infra*: "a *serviceable* villain."

17 *one-trunk-inheriting*] possessing a stock of clothes which would all go into a single trunk.

that wouldst be a bawd in way of good service, and art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pandar, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch: one ²⁰ whom I will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deniest the least syllable of thy addition.

Osw. Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus to rail on one that is neither known of thee nor knows thee!

KENT. What a brazen-faced varlet art thou, to deny thou knowest me! Is it two days ago since I tripped up thy heels and beat thee before the king? Draw, you rogue: for, though it be night, yet the moon shines; I'll make a sop o' the moonshine of you: draw, you whore-son cullionly barber-monger, draw. [*Drawing his sword.* ³⁰

Osw. Away! I have nothing to do with thee.

KENT. Draw, you rascal: you come with letters against the king, and take vanity the puppet's part against the royalty of her father: draw, you rogue, or I'll so carbonado your shanks: draw, you rascal; come your ways.

Osw. Help, ho! murder! help!

²² *addition*] title.

²⁸⁻²⁹ *I'll make a sop o' the moonshine of you*] I'll beat you to a mummy by moonlight. There is a quibbling reference to a popular dish known as "eggs in moonshine." "A sop" literally meant a piece of toast soaked in wine or ale.

³⁰ *cullionly barber-monger*] rascally frequenter of barbers' shops, where he was forever getting his hair and beard trimmed.

³³ *vanity the puppet's part*] Lady Vanity was a conventional character in the old moralities, and was usually dressed as a woman.

³⁵ *carbonado*] slash; a culinary term.

KENT. Strike, you slave; stand, rogue; stand, you
neat slave, strike. [Beating him.]

Osw. Help, ho! murder! murder!

*Enter EDMUND, with his rapier drawn, CORNWALL, REGAN,
GLOUCESTER, and Servants*

EDM. How now! What's the matter? [Parting them. 40]

KENT. With you, goodman boy, an you please: come,
I'll flesh you; come on, young master.

GLOU. Weapons! arms! What's the matter here?

CORN. Keep peace, upon your lives;
He dies that strikes again. What is the matter?

REG. The messengers from our sister and the king.

CORN. What is your difference? speak.

Osw. I am scarce in breath, my lord.

KENT. No marvel, you have so bestirred your valour.
You cowardly rascal, nature disclaims in thee: a tailor 50
made thee.

37-38 *you neat slave*] you unmitigated scoundrel. Cf. Jonson's *Poetaster*,
III, v, 15, "*neat wine*" and *ibid.*, IV, iii, 20, "*my neat scoundrel*."

There may be in "*neat*" an implicit allusion to the "*neatness*," i. e.,
spruceness, of Oswald's attire.

40-41 *What's the matter? . . . goodman boy*] In the Folios the word
matter? is followed by an italicised word *Part* which is no doubt an
elliptical indication of the accepted stage direction. Kent attaches
to the word "*matter*" the special sense of "*quarrel*."

goodman] a contemptuous mode of address, equivalent to "*master*."
42 *flesh you*] initiate you in fight. Cf. *Hen. V*, II, iv, 50, and line 118,
infra.

50 *disclaims in thee*] disowns thee; in Elizabethan English an enclitic
"*in*" commonly follows "*disclaim*."

CORN. Thou art a strange fellow: a tailor make a man?

KENT. Ay, a tailor, sir: a stone-cutter or a painter could not have made him so ill, though he had been but two hours at the trade.

CORN. Speak yet, how grew your quarrel?

OSW. This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I have spared at suit of his gray beard, —

KENT. Thou whoreson zed! thou unnecessary letter! My lord, if you will give me leave, I will tread this unbolted villain into mortar, and daub the walls of a jakes with him. Spare my gray beard, you wagtail?

CORN. Peace, sirrah!

YOU beastly knave, know you no reverence?

KENT. Yes, sir; but anger hath a privilege.

CORN. Why art thou angry?

KENT. That such a slave as this should wear a sword,
Who wears no honesty. Such smiling rogues as these,
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords a-twain
Which are too intrinse to unloose; smooth every passion
That in the natures of their lords rebel;
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;

53 *stone-cutter*] sculptor.

59 *zed . . . letter*] Cf. Ben Jonson's *English Grammar*: "Zed is a letter often heard among us, but seldom seen."

60–61 *unbolted*] unsifted, crude, coarse. Cf. *Hen. V.*, II, ii, 137: "finely bolted."

65 *anger hath a privilege*] Cf. *K. John*, IV, iii, 32: "impatience hath his privilege."

69 *holy cords*] bonds of filial affection.

70 *intrinse*] tightly knotted; a fuller form is "intrinsecate"; cf. *Ant. and Cleop.*, V, ii, 302: "this knot *intrinsecate*," and note.

Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks
 With every gale and vary of their masters,
 Knowing nought, like dogs, but following.
 A plague upon your epileptic visage!
 Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool?
 Goose, if I had you upon Sarum plain,
 I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.

CORN. What, art thou mad, old fellow?

80

GLOU. How fell you out? say that.

KENT. No contraries hold more antipathy
 Than I and such a knave.

CORN. Why dost thou call him knave? What is his
 fault?

KENT. His countenance likes me not.

73 *Renege*] Deny, renounce.

halcyon] the kingfisher. There was a popular belief that if the bird was suspended in the air by a cord round its neck, its bill would always point to the quarter from which the wind blew. Cf. Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, I, i, 38-39: "But now how stands the wind? Into what corner peers my *halcyon's bill*?"

76 *epileptic*] distorted by grinning.

77 *Smile you?*] Do you smile at? The verb is rarely used actively. The preposition is similarly omitted, I, i, 160, *supra*: "Thou swear'st thy gods." All the early editions save the Fourth Folio read *smoile* or *smoyle*, an archaic form of "smile."

78 *Sarum*] Salisbury.

79 *Camelot*] the name of the place where in the Arthurian romances King Arthur kept his court and sat in judgment on unworthy knights. Camelot is variously identified with Winchester and South Cadbury, a village in Somerset. The latter is doubtfully said to have been famous for its wealth of geese. So literal an association is not necessary to the interpretation of the passage.

CORN. No more perchance does mine, nor his, nor hers.

KENT. Sir, 't is my occupation to be plain:
I have seen better faces in my time
Than stands on any shoulder that I see
Before me at this instant.

CORN. This is some fellow, 90
Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect
A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb
Quite from his nature: he cannot flatter, he, —
An honest mind and plain, — he must speak truth
An they will take it, so; if not, he's plain.
These kind of knaves I know, which in this plainness
Harbour more craft and more corrupter ends
Than twenty silly ducking observants
That stretch their duties nicely.

KENT. Sir, in good faith, in sincere verity, 100
Under the allowance of your great aspect,
Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire
On flickering Phœbus' front, —

CORN. What mean'st by this?

KENT. To go out of my dialect, which you discom-

92-93 *constrains . . . nature*] forces his outward manner to something different from his natural disposition; his frankness conceals a deceitful nature.

96 *These kind*] See note on *Tw. Night*, I, v, 83: "*These set kind of fools.*"

98-99 *silly ducking observants . . . nicely*] stupidly obsequious attendants, who perform their duties to the extreme limit of punctiliousness.

101-102 *aspect . . . influence*] technical terms of astrology; they well suit the pompously stilted style of speech which Kent here ironically affects.

mend so much. I know, sir, I am no flatterer: he that beguiled you in a plain accent was a plain knave; which, for my part, I will not be, though I should win your displeasure to entreat me to 't.

CORN. What was the offence you gave him?

Osw. I never gave him any:

110

It pleased the king his master very late
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction;
When he, conjunct, and flattering his displeasure,
Tripp'd me behind; being down, insulted, rail'd,
And put upon him such a deal of man,
That worthied him, got praises of the king
For him attempting who was self-subdued,
And in the fleshment of this dread exploit
Drew on me here again.

KENT. None of these rogues and cowards
But Ajax is their fool.

107-108 *I will not be . . . me to't*] Kent clumsily implies that he would decline to be, like Oswald, "a plain (or downright) knave," though he should win Cornwall's disfavour (which he values more than his favour) by yielding to his request to assume that character.

113 *conjunct*] in concert or alliance (with Lear). This reading of the Quartos is replaced in the Folios by *compact*, which has much the same meaning.

114-117 *being down . . . self-subdued*] when I was down he insulted and railed at me, and made himself out to be such a brave man that he won much repute, obtained praises of the king for attacking one who was able to control his anger.

118 *the fleshment*] the initial elation. Cf. line 42, *supra*.

120 *Ajax*] a synonym for a brave, blunt man, whom designing villains always make their butt or get the better of. Doubtless Shakespeare

KING LEAR

ACT II

CORN. Fetch forth the stocks! 120
You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend braggart,
We'll teach you —

KENT. Sir, I am too old to learn:
Call not your stocks for me: I serve the king,
On whose employment I was sent to you:
You shall do small respect, show too bold malice
Against the grace and person of my master,
Stocking his messenger.

CORN. Fetch forth the stocks! As I have life and
honour,
There shall he sit till noon.

REG. Till noon! till night, my lord, and all night too.

KENT. Why, madam, if I were your father's dog, 131
You should not use me so.

REG. Sir, being his knave, I will.

CORN. This is a fellow of the self-same colour
Our sister speaks of. Come, bring away the stocks!
[Stocks brought out.]

GLOU. Let me beseech your grace not to do so:
His fault is much, and the good king his master
Will check him for 't: your purposed low correction
Is such as basest and contemned'st wretches
For pilferings and most common trespasses
Are punish'd with: the king must take it ill, 140

had in mind crafty Ulysses' contemptuous usage of Ajax in Ovid's
Metamorphoses, Bk. XIII.

136-140 *His fault . . . Are punish'd with*] This passage is omitted from
the Folios.

140 *the king*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *The King his Master*,
needs.

That he, so slightly valued in his messenger,
Should have him thus restrain'd.

CORN. I'll answer that.

REG. My sister may receive it much more worse,
To have her gentleman abused, assaulted,
For following her affairs. Put in his legs.

Come, my good lord, away. *[Kent is put in the stocks.]*

[Exeunt all but Gloucester and Kent.]

GLOU. I am sorry for thee, friend; 't is the duke's
pleasure,
Whose disposition, all the world well knows,
Will not be rubb'd nor stopp'd: I'll entreat for
thee.

KENT. Pray, do not, sir: I have watch'd and travell'd
hard; 150

Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.
A good man's fortune may grow out at heels:
Give you good morrow!

GLOU. The duke's to blame in this; 't will be ill
taken. *[Exit.]*

KENT. Good king, that must approve the common
saw,

Thou out of heaven's benediction comest
To the warm sun!

145 *For . . . legs]* This line is omitted from the Folios.

149 *rubb'd]* impeded, hindered. "Rub" technically meant an obstacle
in the bowling alley.

155-157 *must approve . . . sun]* must make good the common proverb,
which ordinarily runs "out of God's blessing into the warm sun."
The phrase is usually applied to a passage "from better to worse,"

Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,
 That by thy comfortable beams I may
 Peruse this letter! Nothing almost sees miracles 160
 But misery: I know 't is from Cordelia,
 Who hath most fortunately been inform'd
 Of my obscured course; and shall find time
 From this enormous state, seeking to give
 Losses their remedies. All weary and o'er-watch'd,
 Take vantage, 'heavy eyes, not to behold
 This shameful lodging.
 Fortune, good night: smile once more; turn thy wheel!
[Sleeps.]

to the exchange of a reasonably safe haven for a scene of probable danger. The origin of the proverb, which is often cited by Elizabethan authors, is obscure. There is perhaps a reference to the perils that awaited threatened persons who took sanctuary in churches on coming out into the open air.

160-161 *Nothing . . . misery*] It is almost only by the unfortunate that miracles are looked for or seen; prosperous people stand in no need of them.

163-165 *and shall find time . . . remedies*] This is the reading of all the old editions; the punctuation is substantially that of the Folios. Kent is continuing in a disjointed way his reference to Cordelia, who, he says, will (or, is certain to) find opportunity out of this anomalous condition of things for an endeavour to remedy these wrongs. The loose construction reflects Kent's drowsy condition. "Enormous" is found in the sense of "abnormal" or "anomalous" in *Two Noble Kinsmen*, V, i, 62: "O great corrector of *enormous* times."

166 *Take vantage*] Take advantage of your sleepiness.

SCENE III — A WOOD

Enter EDGAR

EDG. I heard myself proclaim'd;
 And by the happy hollow of a tree
 Escaped the hunt. No port is free; no place,
 That guard and most unusual vigilance
 Does not attend my taking. Whiles I may 'scape
 I will preserve myself: and am bethought
 To take the basest and most poorest shape
 That ever penury in contempt of man
 Brought near to beast: my face I'll grime with filth,
 Blanket my loins, elf all my hair in knots, 10
 And with presented nakedness outface
 The winds and persecutions of the sky.
 The country gives me proof and precedent
 Of Bedlam beggars, who with roaring voices
 Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
 Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;

2 *happy*] discovered by good luck.

3 *port*] place of exit.

4 *That guard*] Where watchful sentinel.

6 *am bethought*] have thought, have designed.

10 *elf . . . hair*] tangle all my hair; as elves were held to mat the hair of sluts. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, I, iv, 90-91: "(Queen Mab) bakes the elf-locks in foul, sluttish hairs."

14 *Bedlam beggars*] half-crazy beggars, strictly applied to mendicant patients discharged from Bethlehem or Bedlam hospital, but often used with a more general significance of pauper idiots. Cf. I, ii, 129-130, *supra*, and III, vii, 102, *infra*.

16 *wooden pricks*] skewers of wood.

KING LEAR

ACT II

And with this horrible object, from low farms,
 Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes and mills,
 Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,
 Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod! poor Tom! 20
 That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am. [Exit.]

SCENE IV $\frac{1}{3}$ BEFORE GLOUCESTER'S CASTLE

KENT IN THE STOCKS

Enter LEAR, FOOL, and Gentleman

LEAR. 'T is strange that they should so depart from
 home,
 And not send back my messenger.

GENT. As I learn'd,
 The night before there was no purpose in them
 Of this remove.

KENT. Hail to thee, noble master!

LEAR. Ha!
 Makest thou this shame thy pastime?

KENT. No, my lord.

17 *object . . . low*] appearance . . . lowly.

18 *pelting*] paltry, contemptible.

19 *lunatic bans*] mad imprecations.

20 *Turlygod*] This fantastic appellation of a crazy beggar is unexplained.
 A strange fraternity of naked beggars, which infested the continent of
 Europe in the fourteenth century seems to have been known as Turl-
 upins, of which Turlygod has been doubtfully interpreted as a corrupt
 form.

21 *Edgar I nothing am*] I am no longer likely to be mistaken for Edgar.
 I have rid myself of his likeness.

FOOL. Ha, ha! he wears cruel garters. Horses are tied by the heads, dogs and bears by the neck, monkeys by the loins, and men by the legs: when a man's over-lusty at legs, then he wears wooden nether-stocks. 10

LEAR. What's he that hath so much thy place mistook
To set thee here?

KENT. It is both he and she;
Your son and daughter.

LEAR. No.

KENT. Yes.

LEAR. No, I say.

KENT. I say, yea.

LEAR. No, no, they would not.

KENT. Yes, they have.

LEAR. By Jupiter, I swear, no. 20

KENT. By Juno, I swear, ay.

LEAR. They durst not do't;
They could not, would not do't; 't is worse than
murder,
To do upon respect such violent outrage:
Resolve me with all modest haste which way

7 *cruel*] a pun on the word in its ordinary use, and in the sense of worsted yarn, commonly spelt "crewel." The quip is often met with. Cf. Ben Jonson's *Alchemist*, I, i, 173-174: "Ere we contribute a new *crewel garter* To his most *worsted* worship."

10 *nether-stocks*] stockings or socks, as opposed to knee breeches, the upper-stocks.

23 *upon respect*] with deliberation.

24 *Resolve me . . . haste*] Inform me with all the speed that becomes a truthful statement.

Thou mightst deserve, or they impose, this usage,
Coming from us.

KENT. My lord, when at their home
I did commend your highness' letters to them,
Ere I was risen from the place that show'd
My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,
Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth 30
From Goneril his mistress salutations;
Deliver'd letters, spite of intermission,
Which presently they read: on whose contents
They summon'd up their meiny, straight took horse;
Commanded me to follow and attend
The leisure of their answer; gave me cold looks:
And meeting here the other messenger,
Whose welcome, I perceived, had poison'd mine —
Being the very fellow that of late
Display'd so saucily against your highness — 40
Having more man than wit about me, drew:
He raised the house with loud and coward cries.
Your son and daughter found this trespass worth
The shame which here it suffers.

FOOL. Winter's not gone yet, if the wild geese fly
that way.

Fathers that wear rags
Do make their children blind;

32 *spite of intermission*] without any delay, at the cost of postponing audience of me.

34 *meiny*] retinue, household.

40 *Display'd so saucily*] Showed so saucy a demeanour.

41 *drew*] I drew my sword. The subject "I" is drawn from "I perceived" in line 38.

But fathers that bear bags
 Shall see their children kind.
 Fortune, that arrant whore,
 Ne'er turns the key to the poor.

50

But, for all this, thou shalt have as many dolours for thy daughters as thou canst tell in a year.

LEAR. O, how this mother swells up toward my heart!

Hysterica passio, down, thou climbing sorrow,
 Thy element's below! Where is this daughter?

KENT. With the earl, sir, here within.

LEAR. Follow me not; stay here. *[Exit.]*

GENT. Made you no more offence but what you speak of?

60

KENT. None.

How chance the king comes with so small a train?

FOOL. An thou hadst been set i' the stocks for that question, thou hadst well deserved it.

KENT. Why, fool?

FOOL. We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there's no labouring i' the winter. All that follow

52 *turns the key*] offers the key of her favours.

53 *dolours*] a pun on the word in the sense of the coin, and of grief. For the like quibble see *Tempest*, II, i, 18-19, and note.
for thy daughters] owing to, in regard to, thy daughters.

55 *this mother*] the popular name of an hysterical malady, the chief symptom of which was a choking sensation in the throat. The disease was technically known as "hysterica passio."

66-67 *We'll set thee . . . winter*] Cf. *Proverbs*, vi, 6-8: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest."

their noses are led by their eyes but blind men; and there's not a nose among twenty but can smell him that's stinking. Let go thy hold when a great wheel 70 runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following it; but the great one that goes up the hill, let him draw thee after. When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give me mine again: I would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.

That sir which serves and seeks for gain,
 And follows but for form,
 Will pack when it begins to rain,
 And leave thee in the storm.
 But I will tarry; the fool will stay, 80
 And let the wise man fly:
 The knave turns fool that runs away;
 The fool no knave, perdy.

KENT. Where learned you this, fool?

FOOL. Not i' the stocks, fool.

Re-enter LEAR, with GLOUCESTER

LEAR. Deny to speak with me? They are sick? they are weary?

They have travell'd all the night? Mere fetches;
 The images of revolt and flying off.
 Fetch me a better answer.

GLOU. My dear lord,
 You know the fiery quality of the duke; 90

76 *That sir*] That gentleman.

87-88 *fetches . . . flying off*] tricks or subterfuges; the tokens of rebellion and disaffection.

How unremoveable and fix'd he is
In his own course.

LEAR. Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!
Fiery? what quality? Why, Gloucester, Gloucester,
I'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

GLOU. Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.

LEAR. Inform'd them! Dost thou understand me,
man?

GLOU. Ay, my good lord.

LEAR. The king would speak with Cornwall; the dear
father 99

Would with his daughter speak, commands her service:
Are they inform'd of this? My breath and blood!

"Fiery"? "the fiery duke"? Tell the hot duke that —

No, but not yet: may be he is not well:

Infirmity doth still neglect all office

Whereto our health is bound; we are not ourselves

When nature being oppress'd commands the mind

To suffer with the body: I'll forbear;

And am fall'n out with my more headier will,

To take the indisposed and sickly fit

For the sound man. [*Looking on Kent*] Death on my
state! wherefore 110

Should he sit here? This act persuades me

That this remotion of the duke and her

100 *commands her service*] Thus most copies of the First Quarto. The
Folios read less intelligibly *commands, tends, service*.

108-110 *fall'n out . . . sound man*] angered with my too headstrong will,
in mistaking a man suffering from a fit of indisposition and sickness
for one in health.

112 *remotion*] removal.

KING LEAR

ACT II

Is practice only. Give me my servant forth.
Go tell the duke and's wife I'd speak with them,
Now, presently: bid them come forth and hear me,
Or at their chamber-door I'll beat the drum
Till it cry sleep to death.

GLOU. I would have all well betwixt you. *[Exit.]*

LEAR. O me, my heart, my rising heart! But down!

FOOL. Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels when she put 'em i' the paste alive; she knapped 'em o' the coxcombs with a stick, and cried "Down, wantons, down!" 'T was her brother that, in pure kindness to his horse, buttered his hay. 124

Re-enter GLOUCESTER, with CORNWALL, REGAN, and Servants

LEAR. Good morrow to you both.

CORN.

Hail to your grace!

[Kent is set at liberty.]

REG. I am glad to see your highness.

LEAR. Regan, I think you are; I know what reason I have to think so: if thou shouldst not be glad, I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb, Sepulchring an adultrous. *[To Kent]* O, are you free? 130

113 *Give . . . forth]* Free my servant from the stocks.

117 *cry sleep to death]* murder sleep with the noise.

120 *cockney]* "cockney" is rare in the sense, apparently required here, of a female "cook" or "scullion." It is more often applied to an effeminate man or woman. But the fool talks somewhat at random.

121 *knapped]* cracked; this is the reading of the Folios. The Quartos read *rapt*.

124 *buttered his hay]* a reference to the practice of dishonest ostlers, who sold for their own profit greased hay which the horses refused.

Some other time for that. Beloved Regan,
Thy sister's naught: O Regan, she hath tied
Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here:

[Points to his heart.]

I can scarce speak to thee; thou'lt not believe
With how depraved a quality — O Regan!

REG. I pray you, sir, take patience: I have hope
You less know how to value her desert
Than she to scant her duty.

LEAR. Say, how is that?

REG. I cannot think my sister in the least
Would fail her obligation: if, sir, perchance
She have restrain'd the riots of your followers,
'T is on such ground and to such wholesome end
As clears her from all blame.

140

LEAR. My curses on her!

REG. O, sir, you are old;
Nature in you stands on the very verge
Of her confine: you should be ruled and led
By some discretion that discerns your state

135 *quality*] disposition.

137-138 *You less know . . . duty*] The duplication of the negative words
"less know" and "scant" makes the somewhat inverted language diffi-
cult to paraphrase, though the sense is clear. The general meaning is
"You are no more capable of adequately valuing her merits than she
is capable of failing in her filial duty"; in other words, "she is more
dutiful than you are capable of recognising."

147 *some discretion . . . state*] some discreet person that understands
your helpless condition. The abstract word "discretion" is put for
the concrete person, who possesses that quality. Cf. III, i, 24, *infra*,
"speculations."

KING LEAR

ACT II

Better than you yourself. Therefore I pray you
That to our sister you do make return;
Say you have wrong'd her, sir.

LEAR. Ask her forgiveness? 150
Do you but mark how this becomes the house:
[*Kneeling*] "Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;
Age is unnecessary: on my knees I beg
That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed and food."

REG. Good sir, no more; these are unsightly tricks:
Return you to my sister.

LEAR. [*Rising*] Never, Regan:
She hath abated me of half my train;
Look'd black upon me; struck me with her tongue,
Most serpent-like, upon the very heart:
All the stored vengeance of heaven fall 160
On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones,
You taking airs, with lameness.

CORN. Fie, sir, fie!

LEAR. You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding
flames
Into her scornful eyes. Infect her beauty,
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun
To fall and blast her pride.

151 *becomes the house*] fits family relations, suits the domestic ties between father and daughter.

153 *Age is unnecessary*] Old people are useless.

161 *young bones*] unborn infants.

162 *taking airs*] airs that bewitch, strike with disease. Cf. III, iv, 58, *infra*; *Hamlet*, I, i, 163, and *M. Wives*, IV, iv, 31: "And there he blasts the tree, and takes the cattle."

166 *To fall and blast*] "So that it fall and blast." Thus the Quartos.

REG. O the blest gods! so will you wish on me,
When the rash mood is on.

LEAR. No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse:
Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give 170
Thee o'er to harshness: her eyes are fierce, but thine
Do comfort and not burn. 'Tis not in thee
To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,
And in conclusion to oppose the bolt
Against my coming in: thou better know'st
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude;
Thy half o' the kingdom hast thou not forgot,
Wherein I thee endow'd.

REG. Good sir, 'o the purpose. 180

LEAR. Who put my man i' the stocks? [*Tucket within.*]

The Folios read *To fall and blister*. "Fall" is often used transitively in Shakespeare in the sense of "humble" or "pull down." But it may have here the ordinary intransitive meaning of "fall to ruin."

168 *rash mood*] impulsive fit of passion.

170 *tender-hefted*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *tender hested*. Neither word is quite easy to understand. Shakespeare uses "hefts" in *Wint. Tale*, II, i, 45, for "heavings" (of the breast); hence *tender-hefted* may mean "of tender disposition." More commonly "heft" means either "weight" or "handle" (cf. "haft"), which would make "tender-hefted" equivalent either to "weighted with tenderness" or "manageable." "Hest" or "behest" means vow or promise, and *tender-hested* would mean "tender-vowed," "plighted to gentleness." Cf. "plighted *hest*" (Turberville, *Ovid's Epist.*, 1576, p. 141).

174 *scant my sizes*] contract my allowances. At Cambridge a sizar was one who received sizes or allowances of food from the college.

178 *Effects*] Shows, manifestations.

KING LEAR

ACT II

CORN. What trumpet's that?

REG. I know't; my sister's: this approves her letter,
That she would soon be here.

Enter OSWALD

Is your lady come?

LEAR. This is a slave whose easy-borrow'd pride
Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows.
Out, varlet, from my sight!

CORN. What means your grace?

LEAR. Who stock'd my servant? Regan, I have
good hope
Thou didst not know on't. Who comes here?

Enter GONERIL

O heavens,

If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
Allow obedience, if yourselves are old, 190
Make it your cause; send down, and take my part!
[*To Gon.*] Art not ashamed to look upon this beard?
O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?

GON. Why not by the hand, sir? How have I
offended?

All's not offence that indiscretion finds
And dotage terms so.

182 *approves*] corroborates, confirms.

184-185 *easy-borrow'd pride . . . follows*] whose pride, assumed on easy
pretensions (*i. e.*, on no just ground) rises and falls with the shifting
favour of his mistress.

190 *Allow*] Approve of.

195 *finds*] judges, esteems.

LEAR. O sides, you are too tough;
Will you yet hold? How came my man i' the stocks?

CORN. I set him there, sir: but his own disorders .
Deserved much less advancement.

LEAR. You! did you?

REG. I pray you, father, being weak, seem so. 200
If, till the expiration of your month,
You will return and sojourn with my sister,
Dismissing half your train, come then to me:
I am now from home and out of that provision
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

LEAR. Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
To wage against the enmity o' the air,
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl, —
Necessity's sharp pinch! Return with her? 210
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took
Our youngest born, I could as well be brought
To knee his throne, and, squire-like, pension beg
To keep base life afoot. Return with her?
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter
To this detested groom. [*Pointing at Oswald.*]

GON. At your choice, sir.

LEAR. I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad:
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell:
We'll no more meet, no more see one another:

200 *seem so*] deem yourself so, behave so.

208 *wage against*] contend with. "Wage" is rarely used intransitively.

209 *owl*] Thus the early editions. There seems no good ground for accepting Collier's suggestion *howl*.

215 *sumpter*] literally a pack-horse, but often found in the sense of "drudge."

But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter; 220
 Or rather a disease that 's in my flesh,
 Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil,
 A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,
 In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee;
 Let shame come when it will, I do not call it:
 I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
 Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove:
 Mend when thou canst; be better at thy leisure:
 I can be patient; I can stay with Regan,
 I and my hundred knights.

REG. Not altogether so: 230
 I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
 For your fit welcome. Give ear, sir, to my sister;
 For those that mingle reason with your passion
 Must be content to think you old, and so —
 But she knows what she does.

LEAR. Is this well spoken?

REG. I dare avouch it, sir: what, fifty followers?
 Is it not well? What should you need of more?
 Yea, or so many, sith that both charge and danger
 Speak 'gainst so great a number? How in one house 240
 Should many people under two commands
 Hold amity? 'T is hard, almost impossible.

223 *embossed*] swollen.

226–227 *thunder-bearer . . . high-judging*] Both expressions refer to Jupiter. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, II, iii, 9: “thunder-darter.” “High-judging” merely means “pronouncing judgments on high.”

233 *mingle reason . . . passion*] examine your passionate outbursts in the light of reason.

238 *charge*] expense.

GON. Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance
From those that she calls servants or from mine?

REG. Why not, my lord? If then they chanced to
slack you,
We could control them. If you will come to me,
For now I spy a danger, I entreat you
To bring but five and twenty: to no more
Will I give place or notice.

LEAR. I gave you all —

REG. And in good time you gave it.

LEAR. Made you my guardians, my depositaries, 250
But kept a reservation to be follow'd
With such a number. What, must I come to you
With five and twenty, Regan? said you so?

REG. And speak 't again, my lord; no more with me.

LEAR. Those wicked creatures yet do look well-
favour'd,
When others are more wicked; not being the worst
Stands in some rank of praise. [*To Gon.*] I'll go with
thee:

Thy fifty yet doth double five and twenty,
And thou art twice her love.

GON. Hear me, my lord:
What need you five and twenty, ten, or five, 260
To follow in a house where twice so many
Have a command to tend you?

248 *notice*] recognition.

250 *depositaries*] trustees.

251 *reservation*] used in the legal sense of saving clause, as in I, i, 133,
supra.

KING LEAR

ACT II

REG.

What need one?

LEAR. O, reason not the need: our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous:
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life's as cheap as beast's: thou art a lady;
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But for true
need, —

You heavens, give me that patience, patience I
need! 270

You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age; wretched in both:
If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,
And let not women's weapons, water-drops,
Stain my man's cheeks! No, you unnatural hags,
I will have such revenges on you both
That all the world shall — I will do such things, —
What they are, yet I know not, but they shall be 280
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep;
No, I'll not weep:
I have full cause of weeping; but this heart

264 *Are . . . superfluous*] Have in the very depths of poverty something above their actual need. Cf. IV, i, 68, *infra*, where "superfluous" means "possessed of abundance."

267-269 *If only . . . warm*] If fine clothing were only to be measured by its power of keeping one warm, there would be no need of your gorgeous raiment, which scarcely serves the purposes of warmth.

Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad!

[*Exeunt Lear, Gloucester, Kent, and Fool.*]

CORN. Let us withdraw; 't will be a storm.

[*Storm and tempest.*]

REG. This house is little: the old man and his people
Cannot be well bestow'd.

GON. 'T is his own blame; hath put himself from rest,
And must needs taste his folly. • 290

REG. For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,
But not one follower.

GON. So am I purposed.
Where is my lord of Gloucester?

CORN. Follow'd the old man forth: he is return'd.

Re-enter GLOUCESTER

GLOU. The king is in high rage.

CORN. Whither is he going?

GLOU. He calls to horse; but will I know not whither.

CORN. 'T is best to give him way; he leads himself.

GON. My lord, entreat him by no means to stay.

GLOU. Alack, the night comes on, and the bleak
winds

Do sorely ruffle; for many miles about 300
There's scarce a bush.

284 *flaws*] usually "cracks" or "chinks," but not uncommonly "fragments." The word is specifically used of thin parings of precious stones.

291 *For his particular*] In his own person, as for himself alone.

298 *entreat . . . no means*] do not on any account entreat him.

300 *ruffle*] bluster.

KING LEAR

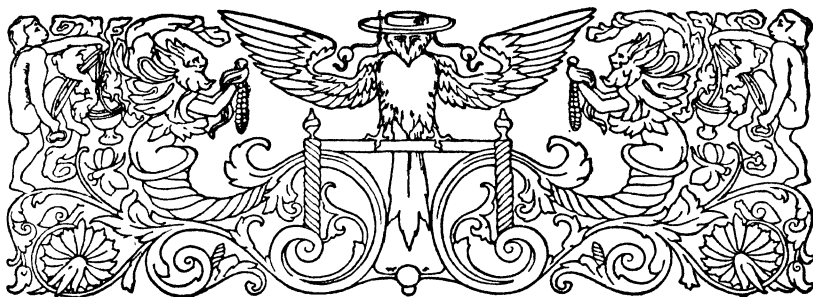
ACT II

REG. O, sir, to wilful men
The injuries that they themselves procure
Must be their schoolmasters. Shut up your doors:
He is attended with a desperate train;
And what they may incense him to, being apt
To have his ear abused, wisdom bids fear.

CORN. Shut up your doors, my lord; 't is a wild night:
My Regan counsels well: come out o' the storm.

[*Exeunt.*

304 *He is attended . . . train*] Regan appears to falsify the present facts. Lear departs unattended by any train of followers. The fool is now the king's only companion, cf. III, i, 15-16, *infra*.



ACT THIRD — SCENE. I

A HEATH

Storm still. Enter KENT and a Gentleman, meeting

KENT



HO'S THERE, BESIDES
foul weather?

GENT. One minded like the
weather, most unquietly.

KENT. I know you. Where's
the king?

GENT. Contending with the
fretful elements;
Bids the wind blow the earth into
the sea,

Or swell the curled waters 'bove
the main,

That things might change or
cease; tears his white hair,

Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,
Catch in their fury, and make nothing of;

6 main] mainland.

7-15 tears his white hair . . . what will take all] This passage is
omitted from the Folios. It occurs only in the Quartos.

KING LEAR

ACT III

Strives in his little world of man to out-scorn 10
 The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.
 This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch,
 The lion and the belly-pinched wolf
 Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,
 And bids what will take all.

KENT. But who is with him?

GENT. None but the fool; who labours to out-jest
 His heart-struck injuries.

KENT. Sir, I do know you;
 And dare, upon the warrant of my note,
 Commend a dear thing to you. There is division,
 Although as yet the face of it be cover'd 20
 With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Cornwall;
 Who have — as who have not, that their great stars
 Throned and set high? — servants, who seem no less,

8 *eyeless*] blind, undiscerning.

9 *make nothing of*] toss about irreverently.

10 *his little world of man*] Elizabethans were very fond of comparing man
 to a little world or microcosm. Cf. *2 Hen. IV*, IV, iii, 107: "this little
 kingdom, man."

12 *cub-drawn*] sucked dry by the cubs, and thereby rendered hungry and
 ferocious.

13 *belly-pinched*] ravenous.

15 *what will take all*] a common exclamation of hopeless despair.

18 *upon the warrant of my note*] on the strength of my knowledge of you.
 Thus the Folios. For *note* the Quartos read *Art*, which is hardly
 intelligible.

19 *a dear thing*] an urgent, desperate matter.

22-29 *Who have . . . furnishings*] These lines are omitted from the
 Quartos. They appear only in the Folios.

22-23 *as who . . . set high?*] as what persons have not, whose eminent
 fortune has ever elevated them to thrones.

Which are to France the spies and speculations
 Intelligent of our state; what hath been seen,
 Either in snuffs and packings of the dukes,
 Or the hard rein which both of them have borne
 Against the old kind king, or something deeper,
 Whereof perchance these are but furnishings, —
 But true it is, from France there comes a power 30
 Into this scatter'd kingdom; who already,
 Wise in our negligence, have secret feet
 In some of our best ports, and are at point
 To show their open banner. Now to you:
 If on my credit you dare build so far
 To make your speed to Dover, you shall find
 Some that will thank you, making just report
 Of how unnatural and bemadding sorrow
 The king hath cause to plain.
 I am a gentleman of blood and breeding, 40
 And from some knowledge and assurance offer
 This office to you.

24–28 *speculations . . . king*] observers giving intelligence about our political affairs; reporting what has been noticed either in the matter of the jealous quarrels and underhand intrigues of the dukes one against another or the cruel tyranny which both have exerted on the kind old king. “Speculations” is another instance of the abstract used for the concrete. Cf. II, iv, 147, *supra*.

29 *furnishings*] trimmings, appendages.

30–42 *But true . . . to you*] These lines are omitted from the Folios. They are found only in the Quartos.

30 *a power*] a military force.

31 *scatter'd*] divided, disunited.

32 *have secret feet*] have secretly set foot. Cf. III, iii, 13, *infra*: “a power already footed.”

33–34 *at point To show*] on the point of showing.

KING LEAR

ACT III

GENT. I will talk further with you.

KENT. No, do not.

For confirmation that I am much more
Than my out-wall, open this purse and take
What it contains. If you shall see Cordelia, —
As fear not but you shall, — show her this ring,
And she will tell you who your fellow is
That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm!
I will go seek the king.

GENT. Give me your hand: 50

Have you no more to say?

KENT. Few words, but, to effect, more than all yet;
That when we have found the king, — in which your
 pain
That way, I'll this, — he that first lights on him
Holla the other. *[Exeunt severally.]*

SCENE II — ANOTHER PART OF THE HEATH

STORM STILL

Enter LEAR and Fool

LEAR. Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage!
blow!

You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout

45 *out-wall*] exterior.

48 *your fellow*] your present companion.

52 *to effect*] in effect, in importance.

53–54 *in which your pain . . . I'll this*] in which your endeavours shall
take that way, while I'll take this direction.

2 *cataracts and hurricanoes*] cataracts of water falling from the heavens,

Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!
 You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
 Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
 Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
 Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world!
 Crack nature's moulds, all germins spill at once
 That make ingrateful man!

FOOL. O nuncle, court holy-water in a dry house is ¹⁰
 better than this rain-water out o' door. * Good nuncle,
 in, and ask thy daughters' blessing: here's a night pities
 neither wise man nor fool.

LEAR. Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
 Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
 I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
 I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
 You owe me no subscription: then let fall
 Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
 A poor, infirm, weak and despised old man:

20

-
- . and waterspouts in the sea. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, V, ii, 169-170:
 "the dreadful spout Which shipman do the *hurricane* call."
 3 *cocks*] the cocks on the tops of steeples.
 4 *thought-executing*] working with the rapidity of thought.
 5 *Vaunt-couriers*] Heralds, forerunners.
 8 *germins*] seeds. Cf. *Macb.*, IV, i, 59: "nature's *germins* tumble all
 together," and see for the whole passage, *Wint. Tale*, IV, iv, 470-471:
 "Let nature crush the sides o' the earth together, And mar the seeds
 within."
 10 *court holy-water*] flattering speeches. Cotgrave (*French-Eng. Dict.*)
 gives under "Eau" the French phrase "*eau beniste de Cour*," which
 he explains as "*Court holy water*; compliments . . . glosing, soothing,
 palpable coggings."
 18 *subscription*] allegiance.

But yet I call you servile ministers,
 That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
 Your high-engender'd battles 'gainst a head
 So old and white as this. O! O! 't is foul!

FOOL. He that has a house to put's head in has a
 good head-piece.

The cod-piece that will house
 Before the head has any,
 The head and he shall louse
 So beggars marry many.
 The man that makes his toe
 What he his heart should make
 Shall of a corn cry woe,
 And turn his sleep to wake.

For there was never yet fair woman but she made
 mouths in a glass.

LEAR. No, I will be the pattern of all patience;
 I will say nothing.

23 *high-engender'd battles*] armies bred on high (*i. e.*, in the sky);
 battalions recruited in the heavens.

27 *cod-piece*] a conspicuous part of masculine attire among Elizabethans.
 The fool's semi-intelligible verse suggests here that he who provides
 an asylum for the least worthy object about him before he takes meas-
 ures to safeguard his worthier self is likely to incur filthy disgrace.

29 *louse*] suffer from lice.

30 *So beggars marry many*] A proverbial phrase, with some barely relevant
 allusion here to the plague of insect-parasites that beggars invite by
 their wholesale breaches of strict monogamic law.

31-34 *The man . . . wake*] The general meaning is that the man who
 cherishes a mean part of his being, instead of a really vital part, is
 likely to suffer pain from the very part to which he shows the unwise
 preference.

KENT. Who's there?

KENT. Alas, sir, are you here? things that love night
Love not such nights as these; the wrathful skies
Gallow the very wanderers of the dark,
And make them keep their caves: since I was man,
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard: man's nature cannot carry
The affliction nor the fear.

LEAR. Let the great gods,
That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads, 50
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipp'd of justice: hide thee, thou bloody hand;
Thou perjured, and thou simular man of virtue
That art incestuous: caitiff, to pieces shake,

cod-piece] The fool calls himself by this name, because among professional fools this part of their dress was usually exceptionally exaggerated.

44 *Gallow*] Frighten; a rare form of the archaic "gally." Both forms survive in dialects.

50 *pothor*] Thus the First Quarto. The Second and Third Quartos read *Thundring*. The Folios substitute *pudder*, a variant form of "pothor."

54 *similar*] *simulating*. Cf. *Cymb.*, V, v, 200, "with *similar* proof." The Folios omit *man*, treating "similar" as equivalent to "simulator."

That under covert and convenient seeming
 Hast practised on man's life: close pent-up guilts,
 Rive your concealing continents and cry
 These dreadful summoners grace. I am a man
 More sinn'd against than sinning.

KENT. Alack, bare-headed! 60
 Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel;
 Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest:
 Repose you there; while I to this hard house —
 More harder than the stones whereof 't is raised;
 Which even but now, demanding after you,
 Denied me to come in — return, and force
 Their scantred courtesy.

LEAR. My wits begin to turn.
 Come on, my boy: how dost, my boy? art cold?
 I am cold myself. Where is this straw, my fellow? 70
 The art of our necessities is strange,
 That can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel.
 Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
 That's sorry yet for thee.

FOOL. [*Singing*]

He that has and a little tiny wit, —
 With hey, ho, the wind and the rain, —
 Must make content with his fortunes fit,
 For the rain it raineth every day.

56 *seeming*] hypocrisy.

58–59 *Rive . . . grace*] Break the bounds of your concealment (*i.e.*, come out into the open) and ask pardon of these dread officers summoning you to justice.

70 *art*] alchemical art, which transmutes the base into the precious metals.

74–77 *He that has . . . every day*] The burden in the second and fourth

LEAR. True, my good boy. Come, bring us to this
hovel. [*Exeunt Lear and Kent.*]

FOOL. This is a brave night to cool a courtezan. I'll
speak a prophecy ere I go: 80

When priests are more in word than matter;
When brewers mar their malt with water;
When nobles are their tailors' tutors;
No heretics burn'd, but wenches' suitors;
When every case in law is right;
No squire in debt, nor no poor knight;
When slanders do not live in tongues,
Nor cutpurses come not to throngs;
When usurers tell their gold i' the field,
And bawds and whores do churches build; 90
Then shall the realm of Albion
Come to great confusion:
Then comes the time, who lives to see 't,
That going shall be used with feet.

This prophecy Merlin shall make; for I live before his
time. [*Exit.*]

lines of the song occur in the clown's concluding song, *Tw. Night*, V, i, 375, *seq.*, of which the first line "When that I was and a little tiny boy" resembles the first line of the fool's song here. In both lines "and" is a common expletive.

79-96 *This . . . time* [*Exit*] This passage only appears in the Folios. It is omitted from the Quartos.

81-94 *When priests . . . with feet*] These lines are adapted, after the manner of parody, from a popular piece of mediæval verse often called *Chaucer's prophecy*, although there is small ground for assigning it to Chaucer. The piece is quoted inaccurately in Puttenham's *Art of English Poesie*, 1589 (ed. Arber, p. 232).

84 *burn'd, but wenches' suitors*] an allusion to the fever of venereal disease.

95 *Merlin*] The prophet of Arthurian romance, to whom was popularly

SCENE III — GLOUCESTER'S CASTLE

Enter GLOUCESTER and EDMUND

GLOU. Alack, alack, Edmund, I like not this unnatural dealing. When I desired their leave that I might pity him, they took from me the use of mine own house; charged me, on pain of their perpetual displeasure, neither to speak of him, entreat for him, nor any way sustain him.

EDM. Most savage and unnatural!

GLOU. Go to; say you nothing. There's a division betwixt the dukes, and a worse matter than that: I have received a letter this night; 't is dangerous to be spoken; ¹⁰ I have locked the letter in my closet: these injuries the king now bears will be revenged home; there is part of a power already footed: we must incline to the king. I will seek him and privily relieve him: go you, and maintain talk with the duke, that my charity be not of him perceived: if he ask for me, I am ill and gone to bed. Though I die for it, as no less is threatened me, the king my old master must be relieved. There is some strange thing toward, Edmund; pray you, be careful.

[*Exit.* ²⁰

assigned many current prophetic utterances. Cf. *1 Hen. IV.* III, i, 150: "the dreamer *Merlin* and his prophecies."

¹³ *footed*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *landed*, which gives the requisite sense. Cf. III, i, 32, *supra*: "a power . . . who already . . . have secret *feet*."

SCENE IV

KING LEAR

EDM. This courtesy, forbid thee, shall the duke
Instantly know, and of that letter too:
This seems a fair deserving, and must draw me
That which my father loses; no less than all:
The younger rises when the old doth fall. [Exit.]

SCENE IV — THE HEATH

BEFORE A HOVEL

Enter LEAR, KENT, and Fool

KENT. Here is the place, my lord: good my lord,
enter:
The tyranny of the open night's too rough
For nature to endure. [Storm still.]

LEAR. Let me alone.

KENT. Good my lord, enter here.

LEAR. Wilt break my heart?

KENT. I had rather break mine own. Good my lord,
enter.

LEAR. Thou think'st 't is much that this contentious
storm
Invades us to the skin: so 't is to thee;
But where the greater malady is fix'd
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'ldst shun a bear,

21 *forbid thee*] which has been forbidden thee.

23 *a fair deserving*] an action deserving fair recognition.

ACT III

The body's delicate: the tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else
Save what beats there. Filial ingratitude!
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand
For lifting food to 't? But I will punish home.
No, I will weep no more. In such a night
To shut me out! Pour on; I will endure.
In such a night as this! O Regan, Goneril!
Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave you all, — 20
O, that way madness lies; let me shun that;
No more of that.

LEAR. Prithee, go in thyself; seek thine own ease:
This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
On things would hurt me more. But I'll go in.
[*To the Fool*] In, boy; go first. You houseless poverty,—
Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you

31 *loop'd and window'd*] full of holes and apertures.

From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
 Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
 Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
 That thou mayst shake the superflux to them
 And show the heavens more just.

EDG. [*Within*] Fathom and half, fathom and half!
 Poor Tom! [*The Fool runs out from the hovel.*]

FOOL. Come not in here, nuncle, here's a spirit. Help
 me, help me! 40

KENT. Give me thy hand. Who's there?

FOOL. A spirit, a spirit: he says his name's poor Tom.

KENT. What art thou that dost grumble there i' the
 straw?

Come forth.

Enter EDGAR disguised as a madman

EDG. Away! the foul fiend follows me!

Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind.

Hum! go to thy cold bed and warm thee.

LEAR. Hast thou given all to thy two daughters? and
 art thou come to this?

EDG. Who gives any thing to poor Tom? whom the 50
 foul fiend hath led through fire and through flame,
 through ford and whirlpool, o'er bog and quagmire;
 that hath laid knives under his pillow and halters in his

37 *Fathom and half*] Probably Edgar refers to the depth of the flood of
 rain from which he is taking refuge in the hovel.

47 *go . . . warm thee*] This colloquial ejaculation appears also in *T. of
 Shrew*, Induction, I, 8.

53-54 *laid knives . . . pew*] The devil was popularly credited with plac-

pew; set ratsbane by his porridge; made him proud of heart, to ride on a bay trotting-horse over four-inched bridges, to course his own shadow for a traitor. Bless thy five wits! Tom's a-cold. O, do de, do de, do de. Bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting, and taking! Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes. There could I have him now, and there, and there again, 60 and there. [Storm still.]

LEAR. What, have his daughters brought him to this pass?

Couldst thou save nothing? Didst thou give them all?

FOOL. Nay, he reserved a blanket, else we had been all shamed.

LEAR. Now, all the plagues that in the pendulous air Hang fated o'er men's faults light on thy daughters!

ing such temptations to suicide in the way of possessed or insane persons. Shakespeare would seem to have been acquainted with Samuel Harsnet's "*A Declaration of egregious Popish Impostures . . . vnder the pretence of Casting out devils*. Practised by . . . a Jesuit and divers Romish priests" (London, 1603, quarto). Harsnet quotes evidence to show that the devil was represented by an obvious trick to have placed within reach of an alleged lunatic "a new halter and two blades of knives." Shakespeare would seem to have derived from Harsnet the names of all the so-called demons or devils, whom Edgar mentions below.

57 *five wits*] The "wits" were reckoned of the same number as the senses. Cf. III, vi, 55, *infra*, and cf. *Tw. Night*, IV, ii, 83, and note.

O, do de, do de, do de] An onomatopœic expression of shivering. The words are omitted from the Quartos. Cf. III, vi, 73, *infra*.

58 *taking*] bewitchment, infection by witches. Cf. II, iv, 162, *supra*: "You taking airs."

66-67 Now, all the plagues . . . daughters] Cf. *Tim. of Ath.*, IV, iii, 108-

KENT. He hath no daughters, sir.

LEAR. Death, traitor! nothing could have subdued
nature

To such a lowness but his unkind daughters. 70

Is it the fashion that discarded fathers

Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?

Judicious punishment! 't was this flesh begot

Those pelican daughters.

EDG. Pillicock sat on Pillicock-hill:
 Halloo, halloo, loo, loo!

FOOL. This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen.

EDG. Take heed o' the foul fiend: obey thy parents; keep thy word justly; swear not; commit not with man's 80
sworn spouse; set not thy sweet heart on proud array. Tom's a-cold.

LEAR. What hast thou been?

EDG. A serving-man, proud in heart and mind; that curled my hair; wore gloves in my cap; served the lust of my mistress' heart and did the act of darkness with

110: "Be as a planetary plague, when Jove Will o'er some high-viced city hang his poison In the sick air."

72 *little mercy on their flesh*] apparently a reference to the pins or thorns which crazy beggars stuck in their flesh; cf. II, iii, 15-16, *supra*.

74 *pelican daughters*] The young of the pelican was commonly credited with drinking its parent's blood.

75 *Pillicock . . . Pillicock-hill*] A nursery rhyme. "Pillicock," which had an indelicate meaning, was often used as a term of endearment for children.

85 *wore gloves in my cap*] Mistresses' favours often took the form of gloves and were worn in the admirers' caps. Cressida begs Troilus wear her glove. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, IV, iv, 73.

KING LEAR

ACT III

her; swore as many oaths as I spake words and broke them in the sweet face of heaven: one that slept in the contriving of lust and waked to do it: wine loved I deeply, dice dearly, and in woman out-paramoured the ⁹⁰ Turk: false of heart, light of ear, bloody of hand; hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey. Let not the creaking of shoes nor the rustling of silks betray thy poor heart to woman: keep thy foot out of brothels, thy hand out of plackets, thy pen from lenders' books, and defy the foul fiend.

"Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind."

Says suum, mun, ha, no, nonny.

Dolphin my boy, my boy, sessa! let him trot by. ⁹⁹

[*Storm still.*]

LEAR. Why, thou wert better in thy grave than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the

91 *light of ear*] credulous of slanderous gossip or of obscenity.

95 *plackets*] the apertures in petticoats.

97-99 *Still through . . . trot by*] The Globe text first printed these lines as verse. The early editions give them as prose.

98 *Says suum . . . nonny*] A combination due to Steevens, of the Folio reading *sayes, suum, mun, monny* and the Quarto reading *hay no on ny*. "Hey nonny nonny" was a common burden of a song. Cf. *Much Ado*, II, iii, 64.

99 *Dolphin my boy*] An almost meaningless colloquial form of address which appears in Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (Act V, Sc. iii), as "Dauphin my boy." Steevens doubtfully assigned the phrase to a popular ballad. The dolphin was often cited as a type of beauty. Cf. "A Merry Knack to know a Knave" (1594), "fairer than the *dolphin's* eye." Dodsley's *Old Plays*, ed. Hazlitt, Vol. VI, p. 514. *sessa*] an interjection enjoining silence. See III, vi, 73, *infra*, and note on *T. of Shrew*, Induction, I, 5.

skies. Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou owest the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume. Ha! here's three on's are sophisticated. Thou art the thing itself: unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings! come, unbutton here. *[Tearing off his clothes.]*

FOOL. Prithee, nuncle, be contented; 't is a naughty night to swim in. Now a little fire in a wild field were like an old lecher's heart, a small spark, all the rest on's body cold. Look, here comes a walking fire. 112

Enter GLOUCESTER, with a torch

EDG. This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet: he begins at curfew and walks till the first cock; he gives the web and the pin, squints the eye and makes the hare-lip; mildews the white wheat and hurts the poor creature of earth.

104 *the cat*] the perfumed civet cat.

105 *sophisticated*] artificially made up (by wearing clothes).

106 *unaccommodated*] unfurnished with artificial equipment.

107 *forked*] two-pronged, two-legged.

lendings] borrowed clothes.

112 *here comes a walking fire*] a reference to Gloucester's approach with a torch.

113 *Flibbertigibbet*] a traditional name of an imp or demon mentioned by Harsnet. See note on lines 53-54, *supra*.

115 *the web and the pin*] cataract of the eye. Cf. *Wint. Tale*, I, ii, 291: "pin and web."

116 *the white wheat*] the ripening wheat.

Saint Withold footed thrice the 'old;
 He met the night-mare and her nine-fold;
 Bid her alight,
 And her troth plight,
 And aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!

120

KENT. How fares your grace?

LEAR. What's he?

KENT. Who's there? What is't you seek?

GLOU. What are you there? Your names?

EDG. Poor Tom, that eats the swimming frog, the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt and the water; that in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages, eats cowdung for sallets; swallows the old rat and the ditch-dog; drinks the green mantle of the standing pool; who is whipped from tithing to tithing, and stock-punished, and imprisoned; who hath had three suits to his back, six shirts to his body, horse to ride and weapon to wear;

118 *Saint Withold* . . . 'old] For Saint Withold the Quartos read *Swithold*, and the Folios *Swithold*. "Sweet Swithold of thy lenity" is invoked by a friar in *The Troublesome Raigne of King John* (Six Old Plays, 1779, I, 256). No such saint apparently is noticed elsewhere, but he has been doubtfully identified with Saint Vitalis, who seems to have been invoked against nightmares. "The 'old" clearly stands for "the wold," low-lying country.

119 *nine-fold*] nine foals.

122 *aroint thee*] begone. Cf. *Macb.*, I, iii, 6: "'Aroint thee, witch!'" and note.

128 *the water*] the water-newt. "Newt" is commonly applied to the lizard.

130 *for sallets*] by way of salads.

132 *tithing*] district or parish.

But mice and rats and such small deer
Have been Tom's food for seven long year.

Beware my follower. Peace, Smulkin; peace, thou fiend!

GLOU. What, hath your grace no better company?

EDG. The prince of darkness is a gentleman: Modo
he's call'd, and Mahu. 140

GLOU. Our flesh and blood is grown so vile, my lord,
That it doth hate what gets it.

EDG. Poor Tom's a-cold.

GLOU. Go in with me: my duty cannot suffer
To obey in all your daughters' hard commands:
Though their injunction be to bar my doors
And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you,
Yet have I ventured to come seek you out
And bring you where both fire and food is ready.

LEAR. First let me talk with this philosopher. 150
What is the cause of thunder?

KENT. Good my lord, take his offer; go into the house.

LEAR. I'll talk a word with this same learned Theban.
What is your study?

135-136 *But mice and rats . . . seven long year*] The lines are cited with slight modifications from the mediæval metrical romance of Bevis of Hampton; "deer" means game.

137 *Smulkin*] the name of one of the fiends noticed, like "Modo" and "Mahu," lines 139, 140, *infra*, by Harsnet. See note on lines 53, 54, *supra*.

142 *gets*] begets. Gloucester, who similarly uses "got" for "begot" (II, i, 80, *supra*), is reflecting on the undutifulness of his son Edgar, whom he does not recognise in his disguise, as well as on that of Lear's daughters.

153 *learned Theban*] an ironical incoherence. A Theban or Bæotian — Thebes was the chief city of Bæotia — commonly connotes stupidity.

KING LEAR

ACT III

EDG. How to prevent the fiend and to kill vermin.

LEAR. Let me ask you one word in private.

KENT. Importune him once more to go, my lord;
His wits begin to unsettle.

GLOU. Canst thou blame him?

[*Storm still.*]

His daughters seek his death: ah, that good Kent!

He said it would be thus, poor banish'd man! 160

Thou say'st the king grows mad; I'll tell thee, friend,

I am almost mad myself: I had a son,

Now outlaw'd from my blood; he sought my life,

But lately, very late: I loved him, friend,

No father his son dearer: truth to tell thee,

The grief hath crazed my wits. What a night's
this!

I do beseech your grace, —

LEAR. O, cry you mercy, sir.

Noble philosopher, your company.

EDG. Tom's a-cold.

GLOU. In, fellow, there, into the hovel: keep thee
warm. 170

LEAR. Come, let's in all.

KENT. This way, my lord.

LEAR. With him;

I will keep still with my philosopher.

KENT. Good my lord, soothe him; let him take the
fellow.

GLOU. Take him you on.

KENT. Sirrah, come on; go along with us.

163 *outlaw'd from my blood*] disowned and disinherited.

LEAR. Come, good Athenian.

GLOU. No words, no words: hush.

EDG. Child Rowland to the dark tower came:

His word was still "Fie, foh, and fum,

I smell the blood of a British man." [Exeunt. 180

SCENE V — GLOUCESTER'S CASTLE

Enter CORNWALL and EDMUND

CORN. I will have my revenge ere I depart his house.

EDM. How, my lord, I may be censured, that nature thus gives way to loyalty, something fears me to think of.

178-180 *Child Rowland . . . British man*] These lines are probably scraps from one or (it may be) two old ballads, which are not positively known to have been handed down in full. Doubt exists as to the antiquity and authenticity of an extant Scottish ballad called "Child Roland and Burd Ellen," dealing with an heroic rescue by the "Child Roland" of his sister Ellen from a giant's enchantment. This ballad in its present shape contains the lines "with fie, fie, fo and fum, I smell the blood of a Christian man," but they are possibly based on Shakespeare's lines. (Cf. Child, *Ballads*, I, 245.) The words "Fy, fa, fum, I smell the bloud of an English-man," are quoted as too familiar a colloquialism to deserve discussion, in Nashe's *Have with you to Saffron Walden*, 1596. (Nashe's Works, ed. McKerrow, III, 37). They possibly belong to an early (lost) version of a nursery ballad of Jack the Giant Killer, of which Child Roland may perhaps have been the hero's original name; but precise evidence is lacking. For Shakespeare's use of "British" here in place of English see IV, vi, 252, *infra*, and note.

2-3 *How, my lord . . . fears me to think of*] I am somewhat afraid, my lord, of the opinion that may be formed of me, in that I sacrifice my filial feeling to my sense of loyalty to you.

CORN. I now perceive, it was not altogether your brother's evil disposition made him seek his death, but a provoking merit, set a-work by a reproveable badness in himself.

EDM. How malicious is my fortune, that I must repent to be just! This is the letter he spoke of, which approves him an intelligent party to the advantages of France. O heavens! that this treason were not, or not I the detector?

CORN. Go with me to the duchess.

EDM. If the matter of this paper be certain, you have mighty business in hand.

CORN. True or false, it hath made thee earl of Gloucester. Seek out where thy father is, that he may be ready for our apprehension.

EDM. [*Aside*] If I find him comforting the king, it will stuff his suspicion more fully. — I will persevere in my course of loyalty, though the conflict be sore between that and my blood.

CORN. I will lay trust upon thee, and thou shalt find a dearer father in my love. [*Exeunt.*]

6-7 *a provoking merit . . . in himself*] a certain measure of virtue, which prompted action, being set in motion by a reprehensible depravity in his father's own nature.

10 *an intelligent party*] an informer, a spy.

19 *comforting*] supporting (as a legal accessory); the word is used in its legal sense.

22 *my blood*] my natural feeling.

SCENE VI—A CHAMBER IN A FARMHOUSE
ADJOINING THE CASTLE

Enter GLOUCESTER, LEAR, KENT, Fool, and EDGAR

GLOU. Here is better than the open air; take it thankfully. I will piece out the comfort with what addition I can: I will not be long from you.

KENT. All the power of his wits have given way to his impatience: the gods reward your kindness!

[Exit Gloucester.]

EDG. Frateretto calls me, and tells me Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness. Pray, innocent, and beware the foul fiend.

FOOL. Prithee, nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman. 10

LEAR. A king, a king!

FOOL. No, he's a yeoman that has a gentleman to his son, for he's a mad yeoman that sees his son a gentleman before him.

LEAR. To have a thousand with red burning spits
Come hissing in upon 'em, —

6 *Frateretto*] The name of a fiend in Harsnet. See note on III, i, 53–54, *supra*.

6–7 *Nero . . . darkness*] According to Rabelais (Pantagruel, II, 30) Trajan in hell was an angler for frogs, while Nero was there as a fiddler. Possibly Shakespeare was thinking confusedly of Rabelais' remark. There seems no historic ground for describing Nero as an angler.

12–15 *No, he's a yeoman . . . before him*] This speech of the fool is omitted from the Quartos; it is only found in the Folios.

EDG. The foul fiend bites my back.

FOOL. He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf,
a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath.

LEAR. It shall be done; I will arraign them straight. ²⁰
[*To Edgar*] Come, sit thou here, most learned justicer;
[*To the Fool*] Thou, sapient sir, sit here. Now, you she
foxes!

EDG. Look, where he stands and glares! Wantest
thou eyes at trial, madam?

Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me.

FOOL. Her boat hath a leak,
And she must not speak

Why she dares not come over to thee.

EDG. The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of
a nightingale. Hopdance cries in Tom's belly for two ³⁰

17-55 *The foul fiend . . . let her 'scape*] This passage occurs only in the Quartos; it is omitted from the Folios.

19 *a horse's health*] A horse's health was notoriously held to be uncertain. Cf. *T. of Shrew*, III, ii, 46, *seq.*, for a long list of diseases to which horses were subject. Cf. *ibid.*, I, ii, 79: "as many diseases as two and fifty horses."

21 *justicer*] justiciar, judge of a high court. Theobald's emendation of the Quarto reading *justice*, which might possibly be retained. But cf. *Cymb.*, V, v, 214: "some upright *justicer*."

23-24 *Wantest thou eyes at trial, madam?*] These words are crazily addressed to Goneril or her sister ("she-foxes"), and implies that the woman who is on her trial fails to see the fiend who "stands and glares."

25 *Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me*] The first line of a popular ballad, dating certainly as early as Henry VIII's reign. The music is also preserved. Cf. Rimbault's *Songs and Ballads*, 1851, pp. 71-76. The Quartos wrongly read *broome* for *bourne* (*i. e.*, brook).

30 *Hopdance*] Pope's spelling of the Quarto *Hoppedance*. Harsnet men-

white herring. Croak not, black angel; I have no food for thee.

KENT. How do you, sir? Stand you not so amazed: Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

LEAR. I'll see their trial first. Bring in the evidence.
[To Edgar] Thou robed man of justice, take thy place;
[To the Fool] And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity,
Bench by his side. [To Kent] You are o' the commission;
Sit you too.

EDG. Let us deal justly.

40

Sleepest or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?

Thy sheep be in the corn;

And for one blast of thy minikin mouth,

Thy sheep shall take no harm.

Pur! the cat is gray.

LEAR. Arraign her first; 't is Goneril. I here take my oath before this honourable assembly, she kicked the poor king her father.

FOOL. Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril?

tions a fiend called Hobberdidaunce, who figures IV, i, 61, *infra*, as Hobbidence. See note on III, iv, 53-54, *supra*.

31 *white herring*] more often used for fresh herring than pickled herring.

36 *robed*] Edgar is wrapped in a blanket; see III, iv, 65, *supra*.

38 *the commission*] the commission of justices of the peace.

41-44 *Sleepest . . . harm*] Possibly a stanza from some unidentified popular song of the day. Many early ballads contain the expression "sleep you, wake you." Cf. Percy's Folio MS., Vol. I, p. 70.

43 *minikin*] pretty, dainty.

45 *Pur! . . . gray*] A demon is designated "Purre" by Harsnet. But Edgar may only be imitating a cat, with a suggestion that he, like the animal, is too "gray" (*i. e.*, too old) to sing.

LEAR. She cannot deny it.

50

FOOL. Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.

LEAR. And here's another, whose warp'd looks proclaim

What store her heart is made on. Stop her there!

Arms, arms, sword, fire! Corruption in the place!

False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape?

EDG. Bless thy five wits!

KENT. O pity! Sir, where is the patience now,
That you so oft have boasted to retain?

EDG. [*Aside*] My tears begin to take his part so much,
They'll mar my counterfeiting.

60

LEAR. The little dogs and all,
Tray, Blanch, and Sweet-heart, see, they bark at me.

EDG. Tom will throw his head at them. Avaunt, you curs!

Be thy mouth or black or white,

Tooth that poisons if it bite;

Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,

Hound or spaniel, brach or lym,

Or bobtail tike or trundle-tail,

Tom will make them weep and wail:

70

51 *I took you for a joint-stool*] A proverbial phrase for a mock apology.

A "joint-stool" was a folding stool. See note on *T. of Shrew*, II, i, 197.

52-53 *whose warp'd looks . . . made on*] whose perverse expression shows
what stuff her heart is made of.

56 *five wits*] See note on III, iv, 57, *supra*.

68 *brach or lym*] bitch hound or bloodhound. *Lym* is Hanmer's correction
of the Quarto reading *him* and the Folio *Hym*. "Lymmer" or "lime-
hound" was a term applied to the bloodhound, which was always
led by a "leam," or "liam," i. e., a leather thong or heavy leash.

For "brach," cf. I, iv, 111, *supra*.

69 *trundle-tail*] a dog with a curled tail.

For, with throwing thus my head,
Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled.

Do de, de, de. Sessa! Come, march to wakes and fairs
and market-towns. Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.

LEAR. Then let them anatomize Regan; see what
breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature
that makes these hard hearts? [*To Edgar*] You, sir, I
entertain for one of my hundred; only I do not like the
fashion of your garments. You will say they are Persian
attire; but let them be changed. 80

KENT. Now, good my lord, lie here and rest awhile.

LEAR. Make no noise, make no noise; draw the cur-
tains: so, so, so. We'll go to supper i' the morning.
So, so, so.

FOOL. And I'll go to bed at noon.

Re-enter GLOUCESTER

GLOU. Come hither, friend: where is the king my
master?

KENT. Here, sir; but trouble him not: his wits are
gone.

72 *the hatch*] the half-door.

73 *Do, de, de, de*] See note III, iv, 57, *supra*.

Sessa] See III, iv, 99, *supra*, and note on *T. of Shrew*, Induction, I, 5.

74 *horn*] a drinking-cup of horn usually carried by beggars.

79-80 *Persian attire*] perhaps a reminiscence of Horace, *Odes*, Bk. I, Ode
xxxviii: "*Persicos apparatus*," *i. e.*, the gorgeous robes of the East.

85 *And . . . noon*] This speech is omitted from the Quartos. These are
the last words spoken by the fool in the play. The expression is often
used to describe an easy way of life. It seems to lack recondite
significance.

KING LEAR

ACT III

GLOU. Good friend, I prithee, take him in thy arms;
I have o'erheard a plot of death upon him:
There is a litter ready; lay him in't, 90
And drive toward Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet
Both welcome and protection. Take up thy master:
If thou shouldst dally half an hour, his life,
With thine and all that offer to defend him,
Stand in assured loss. Take up, take up,
And follow me, that will to some provision
Give thee quick conduct.

KENT. Oppressed nature sleeps.
This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken sinews,
Which, if convenience will not allow,
Stand in hard cure. [*To the Fool*] Come, help to bear
thy master; 100
Thou must not stay behind.

GLOU. Come, come, away.
[*Exeunt all but Edgar.*]

EDG. When we our betters see bearing our woes,
We scarcely think our miseries our foes.

89 *upon him*] against him.

95 *Stand in assured loss*] Are exposed to certain ruin. No uncommon construction. Cf. "Stand in hard cure" (line 100, *infra*).

97-101 *Oppressed . . . behind*] This speech is omitted from the Folios.

98 *broken sinews*] shattered nerves.

100 *Stand in hard cure*] Must prove difficult to cure. Cf., for the expression, line 95, *supra*: "Stand in assured loss."

102-115 *When we . . . lurk*] The whole of this soliloquy is omitted from the Folios, and only appears in the Quartos. Doubts have been raised as to Shakespeare's full responsibility for it. But though the sententious rhyming has bathetic effect, parallels are to be found for it in his authentic work.

Who alone suffers suffers most i' the mind,
 Leaving free things and happy shows behind:
 But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip,
 When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.
 How light and portable my pain seems now,
 When that which makes me bend makes the king bow,
 He childed as I father'd! Tom, away! 110
 Mark the high noises, and thyself bewray
 When false opinion, whose wrong thought defiles thee,
 In thy just proof repeals and reconciles thee.
 What will hap more to-night, safe 'scape the king!
 Lurk, lurk. [Exit.

SCENE VII — GLOUCESTER'S CASTLE

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GONERIL, EDMUND, and Servants

CORN. Post speedily to my lord your husband; show him this letter: the army of France is landed. Seek out the traitor Gloucester. [Exeunt some of the Servants.

REG. Hang him instantly.

105 [*free things*] things free of trouble.

107 [*bearing*] suffering. The word is a substantive.

110 *He childed as I father'd*] A bold use. Such conversion of substantives into verbs is not uncommon in Shakespeare.

111-114 *Mark the high noises . . . hap more*] Note the loud, ominous signs of approaching disturbance, and betray or declare yourself when that false opinion about you of which the error defiles thee shall in presence of just proof of thy integrity repeal the dishonourable verdict and recall thee to the life of honour now denied thee. Whatever further happens, etc.

2 *this letter*] The letter which Edmund has already given to Cornwall, III, v, 9, *et seq., supra.*

GON. Pluck out his eyes.

CORN. Leave him to my displeasure. Edmund, keep you our sister company: the revenges we are bound to take upon your traitorous father are not fit for your beholding. Advise the duke, where you are going, to a most festinate preparation: we are bound to the like. 10 Our posts shall be swift and intelligent betwixt us. Farewell, dear sister: farewell, my lord of Gloucester.

Enter OSWALD

How now! where's the king?

Osw. My lord of Gloucester hath convey'd him hence:

Some five or six and thirty of his knights,
Hot questrists after him, met him at gate;
Who, with some other of the lords dependants,
Are gone with him toward Dover; where they boast
To have well-armed friends.

CORN. Get horses for your mistress.

7 *bound*] prepared, committed. So in line 10, *infra*. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, v, 6: "Speak; I am *bound* to hear."

10 *festinate*] hurried; a pedantic word. Cf. *L. L. L.*, III, i, 6: "festinately."

11 *intelligent*] giving full information. Cf. III, i, 25, *supra*.

12 *my lord of Gloucester*] These words are addressed to Edmund, whom Cornwall somewhat prematurely invests with his father's title. Oswald in line 14 applies the title to the father.

16 *questrists*] searchers or pursuers (engaged in the quest); a very rare word.

17 *lords dependants*] Thus the Quartos. The First Folio reads *Lords, dependants*, which gives the right sense. It is likely that these companions of Lear were vassals of Cornwall, who now forsake their allegiance. Pope substituted *lord's dependants*, meaning less satisfactorily Gloucester's followers.

GON. Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

20

CORN. Edmund, farewell.

[Exeunt Goneril, Edmund, and Oswald.]

Go seek the traitor Gloucester.

Pinion him like a thief, bring him before us.

[Exeunt other Servants.]

Though well we may not pass upon his life

Without the form of justice, yet our power

Shall do a courtesy to our wrath, which men

May blame but not control. Who's there? the traitor?

Enter GLOUCESTER, brought in by two or three

REG. Ingrateful fox! 't is he.

CORN. Bind fast his corky arms.

GLOU. What mean your graces? Good my friends,
consider

You are my guests: do me no foul play, friends. 30

CORN. Bind him, I say. *[Servants bind him.]*

REG. Hard, hard. O filthy traitor!

GLOU. Unmerciful lady as you are, I'm none.

CORN. To this chair bind him. Villain, thou shalt
find — *[Regan plucks his beard.]*

GLOU. By the kind gods, 't is most ignobly done
To pluck me by the beard.

REG. So white, and such a traitor!

GLOU. Naughty lady,
These hairs which thou dost ravish from my chin

23 *pass upon his life*] pass sentence of death on him.

25 *do a courtesy to*] indulge, gratify.

28 *corky*] sapless, shrivelled with age.

KING LEAR

ACT III

Will quicken and accuse thee: I am your host:
With robbers' hands my hospitable favours
You should not ruffle thus. What will you do? 40

CORN. Come, sir, what letters had you late from
France?

REG. Be simple answerer, for we know the truth.

CORN. And what confederacy have you with the
traitors

Late footed in 'the kingdom?

REG. To whose hands have you sent the lunatic king?
Speak.

GLOU. I have a letter guessingly set down,
Which came from one that's of a neutral heart,
And not from one opposed.

CORN. Cunning.

REG. And false.

CORN. Where hast thou sent the king?

GLOU. To Dover. 50

REG. Wherefore to Dover? Wast thou not charged
at peril —

CORN. Wherefore to Dover? Let him first answer
that.

GLOU. I am tied to the stake, and I must stand the
course.

REG. Wherefore to Dover, sir?

38 *quicken*] assume life.

39 *my hospitable favours*] the face or features of me your host.

47 *guessingly set down*] written from conjecture.

53 *the course*] the attack; the bout; the onset of dogs baiting the bear,
according to the custom of the sport. Cf. *Macb.*, V, vii, 2: "bearlike
I must fight *the course*."

GLOU. Because I would not see thy cruel nails
 Pluck out his poor old eyes, nor thy fierce sister
 In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.
 The sea, with such a storm as his bare head
 In hell-black night endured, would have buoy'd up,
 And quench'd the stelled fires: 60
 Yet, poor old heart, he help the heavens to rain.
 If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that stern time,
 Thou shouldst have said, "Good porter, turn the key,"
 All cruels else subscribed: but I shall see
 The winged vengeance overtake such children.

CORN. See 't shalt thou never. Fellows, hold the chair.
 Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot.

GLOU. He that will think to live till he be old,
 Give me some help! O cruel! O you gods!

REG. One side will mock another; the other too. 70

CORN. If you see vengeance —

FIRST SERV. Hold your hand, my lord:
 I have served you ever since I was a child;

57 *stick*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *rash*, a term often applied to the rending of flesh by a boar's tusks.

59 *buoy'd up*] risen up like a buoy, which was sunk in water.

60 *stelled*] probably "fixed," "everlasting." In *Sonnet* xxiv, and *Lucrece*, 1444, "stelled" is found in the sense of "firmly fixed." Theobald less satisfactorily connected "stelled" with "stellatus," *i. e.*, starry.

62 *stern*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *dearne*, *i. e.*, dreary. Cf. *Pericles*, III, Prol., 15: "a *dern* and painful perch," and note.

64 *All cruels else subscribed*] All their cruelty and fierceness in other circumstances being forgiven or condoned. Thus the Quartos. For *subscribed* the Folios read *subscribe*, which it is difficult to interpret, though the phrase might then mean "All other cruel beings in such circumstances yield their ferocity" or "show some humanity."

But better service have I never done you
Than now to bid you hold.

REG. How now, you dog!

FIRST SERV. If you did wear a beard upon your chin,
I'd shake it on this quarrel. What do you mean?

CORN. My villain! *[They draw and fight.]*

FIRST SERV. Nay, then, come on, and take the chance
of anger.

REG. Give me thy sword. A peasant stand up thus!
[Takes a sword and runs at him behind.]

FIRST SERV. O, I am slain! My lord, you have one
eye left 80

To see some mischief on him. O! *[Dies.]*

CORN. Lest it see more, prevent it. Out, vile jelly!
Where is thy lustre now?

GLOU. All dark and comfortless. Where's my son
Edmund?

Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature,
To quit this horrid act.

REG. Out, treacherous villain!
Thou call'st on him that hates thee: it was he
That made the overture of thy treasons to us;
Who is too good to pity thee.

76 *What do you mean?*] This inquiry would come more appropriately from Cornwall.

77 *My villain*] My serf; one legally bound to me in ties of servitude.

83 *Where is thy lustre now?*] The barbarity of the episode of the blinding of Gloucester exceeds in horror any other scene in Shakespeare's work. The pity shown by Cornwall's servants barely relieves the repulsiveness of the outrage.

86 *quit*] requite, repay.

88 *overture*] disclosure. Cf. *Wint. Tale*, II, i, 172.

GLOU. O my follies! Then Edgar was abused. 90
Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him!

REG. Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell
His way to Dover. [*Exit one with Gloucester.*] How is't,
my lord? how look you?

CORN. I have received a hurt: follow me, lady.
Turn out that eyeless villain: throw this slave
Upon the dunghill. Regan, I bleed apace:
Untimely comes this hurt: give me your arm.

[*Exit Cornwall, led by Regan.*]

SEC. SERV. I'll never care what wickedness I do,
If this man come to good.

THIRD SERV. If she live long,
And in the end meet the old course of death, 100
Women will all turn monsters.

SEC. SERV. Let's follow the old earl, and get the
Bedlam

To lead him where he would: his roguish madness
Allows itself to any thing.

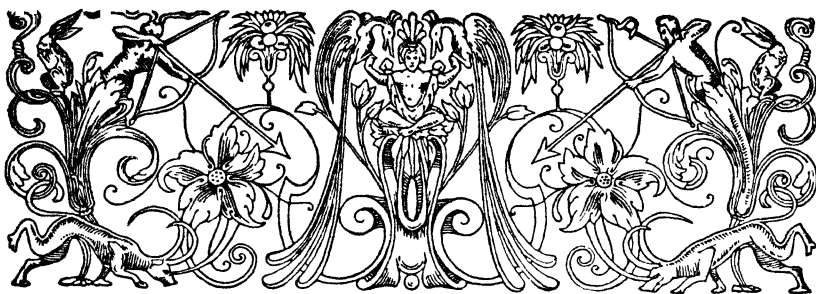
THIRD SERV. Go thou: I'll fetch some flax and
whites of eggs
To apply to his bleeding face. Now, heaven help him!
[*Exeunt severally.*]

98-106 *I'll never care . . . heaven help him*] These lines are omitted
from the Folios, and only appear in the Quartos.

100 *old*] natural, familiar.

102 *the Bedlam*] the crazy beggar, Edgar. Cf. I, ii, 129-130, and II,
iii, 14, *supra*. With a slight inconsistency Gloucester figures in the
next scene in charge not of Edgar, but of a faithful old tenant, and
meets Edgar apparently by accident.

104 *Allows itself*] Adapts itself, is amenable.

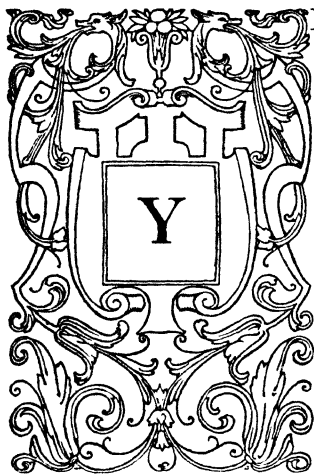


ACT FOURTH — SCENE I

THE HEATH

Enter EDGAR

EDGAR



YET BETTER THUS, AND
 known to be contemn'd,
 Than still contemn'd and flat-
 ter'd. To be worst,
 The lowest and most dejected
 thing of fortune,
 Stands still in esperance, lives
 not in fear:
 The lamentable change is from
 the best;
 The worst returns to laughter.
 Welcome then,
 Thou unsubstantial air that I
 embrace!

The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst
 Owes nothing to thy blasts. But who comes here?

1-2 *Yet better . . . flatter'd*] The general meaning is, "It is better to know that one is contemned than for one to be really contemned and at the same time to be treated with false flattery which conceals the

Enter GLOUCESTER, led by an Old Man

My father, poorly led? World, world, O world! 10
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,
Life would not yield to age.

OLD MAN. O, my good lord, I have been your tenant,
and your father's tenant, these fourscore years.

GLOU. Away, get thee away; good friend, be gone:
Thy comforts can do me no good at all;
Thee they may hurt.

OLD MAN. Alack, sir, you cannot see your way.

GLOU. I have no way and therefore want no eyes;
I stumbled when I saw: full oft 't is seen, 20
Our means secure us, and our mere defects
Prove our commodities. Ah, dear son Edgar,

truth." Johnson's proposal to substitute *unknown* for *and known* conflicts with the context.

3 *most dejected thing*] thing cast down to the lowest depth.

4 *esperance*] French word for "hope."

5-6 *The lamentable change . . . laughter*] Change from the best fortune gives cause for lamentation; change from fortune when at the worst implies recovery, a return to something which makes for gaiety.

6-9 *Welcome . . . thy blasts*] This passage is omitted from the Quartos, and appears only in the Folios.

10-12 *O world! . . . age*] O world, if reverses of fortune did not make us condemn existence altogether, we should never resign ourselves to the hateful incidents of infirm age. In other words, the world with all its uncertainties of fortune is such a repellent object to us that it is a trifling matter whether we are young or old, strong or weak.

21-22 *Our means secure us . . . commodities*] The very possession of resources or capacities renders us careless in using them, and our very deficiencies or weaknesses cause us to employ such care as to make them of advantage to us. In other words, Gloucester means that when he had eyes he used them so carelessly as to stumble; now that he is

KING LEAR

ACT IV

The food of thy abused father's wrath!
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,
I'd say I had eyes again!

OLD MAN. How now! Who's there?

EDG. [*Aside*] O gods! Who is 't can say "I am at
the worst"?

I am worse than e'er I was.

OLD MAN. 'T is poor mad Tom.

EDG. [*Aside*] And worse I may be yet: the worst is not
So long as we can say "This is the worst."

OLD MAN. Fellow, where goest?

GLOU. Is it a beggar-man? 30

OLD MAN. Madman and beggar too.

GLOU. He has some reason, else he could not beg.
I' the last night's storm I such a fellow saw,
Which made me think a man a worm: my son
Came then into my mind, and yet my mind
Was then scarce friends with him: I have heard more
since.

As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods;
They kill us for their sport.

EDG. [*Aside*] How should this be?
Bad is the trade that must play fool to sorrow,
Angering itself and others. Bless thee, master! 40

blind he must be so watchful of his steps that he is likely to avoid
stumbling: "Secure," which is commonly used adjectively as "care-
less," means as a verb "to render careless." Cf. *Tim. of Ath.*, II, ii,
177: "*Secure* thy heart."

23 *abused*] deceived.

38 *kill*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read, hardly intelligibly, *bitt* or *bit*.

39-40 *play fool to sorrow . . . others*] divert sorrow by making merri-
ment, whereby the distress is aggravated to the general vexation.

GLOU. Is that the naked fellow?

OLD MAN.

Ay, my lord.

GLOU. Then, prithee, get thee gone: if for my sake
Thou wilt o'ertake us hence a mile or twain
I' the way toward Dover, do it for ancient love;
And bring some covering for this naked soul,
Who I'll entreat to lead me.

OLD MAN.

Alack, sir, he is mad.

GLOU. 'T is the times' plague, when madmen lead the
blind.

Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure;
Above the rest, be gone.

OLD MAN. I'll bring him the best 'parel that I have, 50
Come on 't what will. [Exit.]

GLOU. Sirrah, naked fellow, —

EDG. Poor Tom's a-cold. [Aside] I cannot daub it
further.

GLOU. Come hither, fellow.

EDG. [Aside] And yet I must. — Bless thy sweet eyes,
they bleed.

GLOU. Know'st thou the way to Dover?

EDG. Both stile and gate, horse-way and foot-path.
Poor Tom hath been scared out of his good wits. Bless
thee, good man's son, from the foul fiend! Five fiends
have been in poor Tom at once; of lust, as Obidicut; 60

53 *daub*] disguise.

59–64 *Five fiends* . . . *bless thee, master*] These lines are omitted from
the Folios, and appear only in the Quartos.

60–62 *Obidicut* . . . *Flibbertigibbet*] The names of all these five fiends
are adapted from Harsnet (see III, iv, 154, *supra*), though *Obidicut*
is spelt by Harsnet *Hoberdicut*.

Hobbididence, prince of dumbness; Mahu, of stealing; Modo, of murder; Flibbertigibbet, of mopping and mowing; who since possesses chambermaids and waiting-women. So, bless thee, master!

GLOU. Here, take this purse, thou whom the heavens' plagues

Have humbled to all strokes: that I am wretched
Makes thee the happier. Heavens, deal so still!
Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man,
That slaves your ordinance, that will not see
Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly; 70
So distribution should undo excess
And each man have enough. Dost thou know Dover?

EDG. Ay, master.

GLOU. There is a cliff whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully in the confined deep:
Bring me but to the very brim of it,
And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear
With something rich about me: from that place
I shall no leading need.

EDG.

Give me thy arm:

Poor Tom shall lead thee.

[*Exeunt.* 80]

62-63 *mopping and mowing*] grinning and grimacing (like an ape).

68-69 *the superfluous . . . ordinance*] the man surfeited with superfluous luxuries, and fed up by inordinate lusts, who makes the divine ordinances his slave by treating them as subservient to his pleasure.

70 *feel*] *sc.* pain, suffer.

SCENE II — BEFORE THE DUKE OF ALBANY'S PALACE

Enter GONERIL and EDMUND

GON. Welcome, my lord: I marvel our mild husband
Not met us on the way.

Enter OSWALD

Now, where's your master?

Osw. Madam, within; but never man so changed.
I told him of the army that was landed;
He smiled at it: I told him you were coming;
His answer was, "The worse:" of Gloucester's treachery
And of the loyal service of his son
When I inform'd him, then he call'd me sot
And told me I had turn'd the wrong side out:
What most he should dislike seems pleasant to him; 10
What like, offensive.

GON. [*To Edm.*] Then shall you go no further.
It is the cowish terror of his spirit,
That dares not undertake: he'll not feel wrongs,
Which tie him to an answer. Our wishes on the way

1 *Welcome, my lord*] Edmund has escorted Goneril home. See III, vii, 12–21, *supra*. She now welcomes him on entering her house.

8 *sot*] fool.

9 *turn'd the wrong side out*] completely misinterpreted the facts.

13–14 *he'll not feel . . . answer*] he'll take no notice of injuries which will require of him retaliation.

14–15 *Our wishes . . . effects*] The things we wished for when talking of them on the road may come to pass. The reference is to the murder of Goneril's husband, Albany.

KING LEAR

ACT IV

May prove effects. Back, Edmund, to my brother;
 Hasten his musters and conduct his powers:
 I must change arms at home and give the distaff
 Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant
 Shall pass between us: ere long you are like to hear,
 If you dare venture in your own behalf, 20
 A mistress's command. Wear this; spare speech;
 [Giving a favour.

Decline your head: this kiss, if it durst speak,
 Would stretch thy spirits up into the air:
 Conceive, and fare thee well.

EDM. Yours in the ranks of death.

GON. My most dear Gloucester!
 [Exit Edmund.

O, the difference of man and man!
 To thee a woman's services are due:
 My fool usurps my body.

Osw. Madam, here comes my lord.
 [Exit.

Enter ALBANY

GON. I have been worth the whistle.

ALB. O Goneril!
 You are not worth the dust which the rude wind 30
 Blows in your face. I fear your disposition:
 That nature which contemns its origin

17 *change arms*] exchange implements (*i. e.*, spears for spindles).

29 *I have been worth the whistle*] an adaptation of the common proverb,
 "A poor dog is not worth the whistling." Goneril was wont to receive
 an elaborate welcome on her return home.

31-50 *I fear your disposition . . . Like monsters of the deep*] These lines
 are omitted from the Folios, and appear only in the Quartos.

32-33 *That nature . . . in itself*] That disposition which contemns its

Cannot be border'd certain in itself;
 She that herself will sliver and disbranch
 From her material sap, perforce must wither
 And come to deadly use.

GON. No more; the text is foolish.

ALB. Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile:
 Filths savour but themselves. What have you done?
 Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd? 40
 A father, and a gracious aged man,
 Whose reverence even the head-lugg'd bear would lick,
 Most barbarous, most degenerate! have you madded.
 Could my good brother suffer you to do it?
 A man, a prince, by him so benefited!
 If that the heavens do not their visible spirits
 Send quickly down to tame these vile offences,
 It will come,
 Humanity must perforce prey on itself,
 Like monsters of the deep.

GON. Milk-liver'd man! 50
 That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs;

parentage cannot be restrained within any fixed bounds (of law and order). *It origin* is the reading of (most copies of) the First Quarto and of the Second Quarto. The Third Quarto has the more modern form *its*.

35 *material sap*] sap giving essential nourishment.

36 *deadly use*] the use fitted for a thing that is dead, as in the case of dead wood, which is fit only for burning.

39 *Filths . . . themselves*] Filthy things only have a taste for filthy things.

42 *the head-lugg'd bear*] the bear dragged about by a cord round its head, and thereby infuriated.

43 *madded*] made mad, maddened.

Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning
 Thine honour from thy suffering; that not know'st
 Fools do those villains pity who are punish'd
 Ere they have done their mischief. Where's thy drum?
 France spreads his banners in our noiseless land,
 With plumed helm thy state begins to threat,
 Whiles thou, a moral fool, sit'st still and criest
 "Alack, why does he so?"

ALB. See thyself, devil!
 Proper deformity seems not in the fiend
 So horrid as in woman.

60

GON. O vain fool!

ALB. Thou changed and self-cover'd thing, for shame,
 Be-monster not thy feature. Were't my fitness
 To let these hands obey my blood,

52-55 *Who hast not . . . mischief*] Whose eyes are not able to distinguish the injury to thy honour in tamely suffering wrong; who dost not know that only fools show pity for those wretches who are punished before they have wrought the mischief they have designed.

53-59 *that not know'st . . . does he so?*] This passage is omitted from the Folios, and appears only in the Quartos.

57 *thy state begins to threat*] Jennens' emendation of the First Quarto reading *thy state begins thereat* and the later Quartos' reading *thy slaier begins threats*.

58 *moral*] moralising.

60-61 *Proper deformity . . . woman*] Innate deformity or depravity seems not to be so horrible in the devil as in a woman.

62-68 *Thou changed . . . mew!*] These lines are omitted from the Folios.

62 *self-cover'd*] having your self or real personality covered or concealed (by a woman's shape). Cf. lines 66-67, *infra*. Albany means that Goneril, his wife, is really a fiend, whose form is exchanged with and concealed by "a woman's shape."

64 *blood*] disposition or impulse.

They are apt enough to dislocate and tear
 Thy flesh and bones: howe'er thou art a fiend,
 A woman's shape doth shield thee.

GON. Marry, your manhood! mew!

Enter a Messenger

ALB. What news?

MESS. O, my good lord, the Duke of Cornwall's
 dead,

70

Slain by his servant, going to put out
 The other eye of Gloucester.

ALB. Gloucester's eyes!

MESS. A servant that he bred, thrill'd with remorse,
 Opposed against the act, bending his sword
 To his great master; who thereat enraged
 Flew on him and amongst them fell'd him dead,
 But not without that harmful stroke which since
 Hath pluck'd him after.

ALB. This shows you are above,
 You justicers, that these our nether crimes

68 *manhood! mew!*] Some copies of the First Quarto read *manhood mew* —; others *manhood now* —, a reading substantially followed by the later Quartos. *Marry, your manhood now!* would mean that Goneril, who at line 50 had called her husband “milk-liver’d,” now taunts him with his boast of manhood. *Your manhood mew* would mean “restrain your manhood.” If the two notes of exclamation be admitted as in the text here, “mew” is a derisive interjection, for the use of which there is ample contemporary authority.

73 *remorse*] compassion.

74–75 *bending* . . . *To*] directing . . . at.

79 *justicers*] judges. Cf. III, vi, 23, *supra*.

So speedily can venge. But, O poor Gloucester! 80
Lost he his other eye?

MESS. Both, both, my lord.
This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer;
'T is from your sister.

GON. [*Aside*] One way I like this well;
But being widow, and my Gloucester with her,
May all the building in my fancy pluck
Upon my hateful life: another way,
The news is not so tart. — I'll read, and answer. [*Exit.*]

ALB. Where was his son when they did take his eyes?

MESS. Come with my lady hither.

ALB. He is not here.

MESS. No, my good lord; I met him back again. 90

ALB. Knows he the wickedness?

MESS. Ay, my good lord; 't was he inform'd against
him,

And quit the house on purpose, that their punishment
Might have the freer course.

ALB. Gloucester, I live
To thank thee for the love thou show'dst the king,
And to revenge thine eyes. Come hither, friend:
Tell me what more thou know'st. [*Exeunt.*]

83-86 *One way . . . hateful life*] Goneril's cruelty approves the death of Cornwall and the blinding of Gloucester. But seeing that her sister is now a widow and Edmund, whom she calls by his father's title, "my Gloucester," is in her sister's company, she fears that the design of killing her own husband and of thus opening the road to her own union with Edmund may be foiled, and that the castle of her imagination may fall and crush her own life, which in its present condition is loathsome to her.

90 *back again*] on his way back.

SCENE III — THE FRENCH CAMP NEAR DOVER

Enter KENT and a Gentleman

KENT. Why the King of France is so suddenly gone back know you the reason?

GENT. Something he left imperfect in the state which since his coming forth is thought of, which imports to the kingdom so much fear and danger that his personal return was most required and necessary.

KENT. Who hath he left behind him general?

GENT. The Marshal of France, Monsieur La Far.

KENT. Did your letters pierce the queen to any demonstration of grief? 10

GENT. Ay, sir; she took them, read them in my presence,

And now and then an ample tear trill'd down
Her delicate cheek: it seem'd she was a queen
Over her passion, who most rebel-like
Sought to be king o'er her.

KENT. O, then it moved her.

GENT. Not to a rage: patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears

SCENE iii] The whole of this scene is omitted from the Folios. It appears only in the Quartos.

(stage direction) *a Gentleman*] Cf. III, i, *supra*, where this gentleman was ordered to Dover to inform the French king and Cordelia of Lear's misfortunes.

12 *trill'd*] trickled.

KING LEAR

ACT IV

Were like a better way: those happy smilets
That play'd on her ripe lip seem'd not to know 20
What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. In brief,
Sorrow would be a rarity most beloved,
If all could so become it.

KENT. Made she no verbal question?

GENT. Faith, once or twice she heaved the name of
"father"

Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart;
Cried "Sisters! sisters! Shame of ladies! sisters!
Kent! father! sisters! What, i' the storm? i' the night?
Let pity not be believed!" There she shook 30
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,
And clamour moisten'd: then away she started
To deal with grief alone.

KENT. It is the stars,
The stars above us, govern our conditions;
Else one self mate and mate could not beget
Such different issues. You spoke not with her since?

19 *Were like a better way*] Had an effect of greater beauty than even the concurrence of sunshine and rain could produce. The reading is much disputed. Theobald accepted Warburton's absurd alteration *Were like a wetter May*. Another conjecture *Were like an April day* is, at any rate, unobjectionable.

20 *seem'd*] Pope's emendation of the Quarto reading *seeme*.

31 *clamour moisten'd*] Capell's emendation of the Quarto reading *clamour moistened her*. The words would mean that tears allayed her utterance, and stayed it from clamorous lamentation.

34 *self mate and mate*] the same husband and wife. Thus the Second and Third Quartos. The First Quarto reads *self mate and make*, "make" being a somewhat archaic word for "partner."

GENT. No.

KENT. Was this before the king return'd?

GENT. No, since.

KENT. Well, sir, the poor distressed Lear's i' the town;

Who sometime in his better tune remembers
What we are come about, and by no means
Will yield to see his daughter. 40

GENT. Why, good sir?

KENT. A sovereign shame so elbows him: his own
unkindness

That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd her
To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights
To his dog-hearted daughters: these things sting
His mind so venomously that burning shame
Detains him from Cordelia.

GENT. Alack, poor gentleman!

KENT. Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you heard
not?

GENT. 'T is so; they are afoot.

KENT. Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master Lear, 50
And leave you to attend him: some dear cause
Will in concealment wrap me up awhile;
When I am known aright, you shall not grieve
Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you, go
Along with me. [Exeunt.]

42 *A sovereign shame . . . him*] A predominant sense of shame thus thrusts him aside (from a reconciliation). The sense is explained in lines 46, 47, *infra*, "burning *shame* detains him from Cordelia."

49 *'T is so*] It is the fact that I have heard of them.

51 *some dear cause*] some very good reason.

ACT IV

A TENT

COR. Alack, 't is he: why, he was met even now
As mad as the vex'd sea; singing aloud;
Crown'd with rank fumiter and furrow-weeds,
With bur-docks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers,
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn. A century send forth;
Search every acre in the high-grown field,
And bring him to our eye. [*Exit an Officer.*] What can
man's wisdom

In the restoring his bereaved sense?
He that helps him take all my outward worth. 10

DOCT. There is means, madam :
Our foster-nurse of nature is repose,

3-5 *rank fumiter* . . . *bur-docks* . . . *cuckoo-flowers*, *Darnel*] Cf. *Hen. V*, V, ii, 44-46: "her fallow leas The *darnel*, hemlock and *rank fumitory* Doth root upon." "Fumiter," *i. e.*, "fumitory," from the French "fumeterre," *i. e.*, earth-smoke, is a common sort of weed, of which there seem to be five species known in England. *Bur-docks* is Hamner's change for the Quarto reading *hordocks* and the Folio reading *Hardokes* or *Hardocks*; "hoardock" is the name of a coarse weed with whitish woolly leaves, which seems closely related to the "burdock," a coarse flower bearing prickly flowerheads called "burs," and having large dock-leaves. "Cuckoo flowers" is applied to many plants flowering in the spring, especially "ragged robin"; cf. *L. L. L.*, V, ii, 883, "cuckoo-buds." "Darnel" is raygrass, a weed often found in open corn-fields.

The which he lacks: that to provoke in him,
Are many simples operative, whose power
Will close the eye of anguish.

COR. All blest secrets,
All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth,
Spring with my tears! be aidant and remediate
In the good man's distress! Seek, seek for him;
Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life
That wants the means to lead it.

Enter a Messenger

MESS. News, madam; 20
The British powers are marching hitherward.

COR. 'Tis known before; our preparation stands
In expectation of them. O dear father,
It is thy business that I go about;
Therefore great France
My mourning and important tears hath pitied.
No blown ambition doth our arms incite,
But love, dear love, and our aged father's right:
Soon may I hear and see him! [Exeunt.]

14 *simples*] medicinal herbs.

17 *aidant and remediate*] helpful and remedial. "Remediate" is Shakespeare's coinage, on the model of "immediate."

20 *the means to lead it*] the control of reason to guide it.

26 *important tears*] importunate tears. Cf. *All's Well*, III, vii, 21: "*important blood*."

27 *blown*] inflated.

SCENE V — GLOUCESTER'S CASTLE

Enter REGAN and OSWALD

REG. But are my brother's powers set forth?

OSW. Ay, madam.

REG. Himself in person there?

OSW. Madam, with much ado:
Your sister is the better soldier.

REG. Lord Edmund spake not with your lord at home?

OSW. No, madam.

REG. What might import my sister's letter to him?

OSW. I know not, lady.

REG. Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter.
It was great ignorance, Gloucester's eyes being out,
To let him live: where he arrives he moves 10
All hearts against us: Edmund, I think, is gone,
In pity of his misery, to dispatch
His nighted life; moreover, to descry
The strength o' the enemy.

OSW. I must needs after him, madam, with my letter.

REG. Our troops set forth to-morrow: stay with us;
The ways are dangerous.

4 *your lord*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *your Lady*, which is pointless; for Regan knows that Edmund was her sister Goneril's companion from Gloucester's castle to Albany's palace, and that he had every opportunity of speaking with her on her journey home. Regan's enquiry can only be directed to Edmund's recent relations with Albany, Goneril's husband and Oswald's lord.

13 *nighted*] darkened, gloomy. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, ii, 68: "thy *nighted* colour" (*i. e.*, thy gloomy complexion).

OSW. I may not, madam:
My lady charged my duty in this business.

REG. Why should she write to Edmund? Might not
you

Transport her purposes by word? Belike, 20
Something — I know not what: I'll love thee much,
Let me unseal the letter.

OSW. Madam, I had rather —

REG. I know your lady does not love her husband;
I am sure of that: and at her late being here
She gave strange œillades and most speaking looks
To noble Edmund. I know you are of her bosom.

OSW. I, madam?

REG. I speak in understanding: you are; I know't:
Therefore I do advise you, take this note:
My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talk'd; 30
And more convenient is he for my hand
Than for your lady's: you may gather more.
If you do find him, pray you, give him this;
And when your mistress hears thus much from you,
I pray, desire her call her wisdom to her.

25 *œillades*] amorous glances; a French word. Cf. *M. Wives*, I, iii, 57.

26 *of her bosom*] in her confidence.

29 *take this note*] usually explained as "take note of this." But in view of the "give him this" of line 33, *infra*, and "take thou this note," V, iii, 28, *infra*, Regan is more likely to be referring to a letter which she now hands to Oswald. At IV, vi, 250-258, *infra*, when Oswald dies, "letters" which are in his pockets are twice mentioned, though only one from Goneril to Edmund is actually read out.

35 *desire her call her wisdom to her*] an ironical way of advising Goneril to think better of her amour with Edmund.

So, fare you well.

If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

Osw. Would I could meet him, madam ! I should
show

What party I do follow.

REG.

Fare thee well.

[*Exeunt.* 40]

SCENE VI — FIELDS NEAR DOVER

Enter GLOUCESTER, and EDGAR dressed like a peasant

GLOU. When shall we come to the top of that same
hill ?

EDG. You do climb up it now : look, how we labour.

GLOU. Methinks the ground is even.

EDG. Horrible steep.

Hark, do you hear the sea ?

GLOU. No, truly.

EDG. Why then your other senses grow imperfect
By your eyes' anguish.

GLOU. So may it be indeed :
Methinks thy voice is alter'd, and thou speak'st
In better phrase and matter than thou didst.

EDG. You're much deceived : in nothing am I changed
But in my garments.

38 *Preferment*] Advancement, promotion.

1 *that same hill*] The fine description which follows of the great cliff near Dover has caused it to be long christened "The Shakespeare Cliff."

GLOU. Methinks you're better spoken. 10

EDG. Come on, sir; here's the place: stand still.

How fearful

And dizzy 't is to cast one's eyes so low!

The crows and choughs that wing the midway air

Show scarce so gross as beetles: half way down

Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade!

Methinks he seems no bigger than his head:

The fishermen that walk upon the beach

Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark

Diminish'd to her cock; her cock, a buoy

Almost too small for sight: the murmuring surge 20

That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes

Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more,

Lest my brain turn and the deficient sight

Topple down headlong.

GLOU. Set me where you stand.

EDG. Give me your hand: you are now within a
foot

Of the extreme verge: for all beneath the moon

Would I not leap upright.

13 *choughs*] jackdaws.

15 *samphire*] The early editions read *sampire*, indicating the pronunciation which still survives in America. It is a rock herb named after St. Pierre or St. Peter, which is much used for pickling. It is sometimes called "sea-fennel."

19 *cock*] a ship's small boat, often called cock-boat.

21 *unnumber'd*] innumerable.

27 *Would I not leap upright*] The spot is pretended to be so near the edge of the precipice that the utmost peril would be incurred by any leap or rapid movement in an upright posture.

KING LEAR

ACT IV

GLOU. Let go my hand.
 Here, friend, 's another purse; in it a jewel
 Well worth a poor man's taking: fairies and gods
 Prosper it with thee! Go thou further off; 30
 Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.
 EDG. Now fare you well, good sir.

GLOU. With all my heart.

EDG. Why I do trifle thus with his despair
 Is done to cure it.

GLOU. [*Kneeling*] O you mighty gods!
 This world I do renounce, and in your sights
 Shake patiently my great affliction off:
 If I could bear it longer and not fall
 To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,
 My snuff and loathed part of nature should
 Burn itself out. If Edgar live, O bless him! 40
 Now, fellow, fare thee well. [*He falls forward.*]

EDG. Gone, sir: farewell.
 And yet I know not how conceit may rob
 The treasury of life, when life itself
 Yields to the theft: had he been where he thought,
 By this had thought been past. Alive or dead?
 Ho, you sir! friend! Hear you, sir! speak!
 Thus might he pass indeed: yet he revives.
 What are you, sir?

GLOU. Away, and let me die.

28 *another purse*] Cf. IV, i, 65, *supra*, where Gloucester already gives Edgar one of his purses.

39 *snuff*] refuse or dregs.

42 *conceit*] imagination, false impression.

47 *pass*] pass away, die.

EDG. Hadst thou been aught but gossamer, feathers,
air,
So many fathom down precipitating, 50
Thou'dst shiver'd like an egg: but thou dost breathe;
Hast heavy substance; bleed'st not; speak'st; art
sound.

Ten masts at each make not the altitude
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell:
Thy life's a miracle. Speak yet again.'

GLOU. But have I fall'n, or no?

EDG. From the dread summit of this chalky bourn.
Look up a-height; the shrill-gorged lark so far
Cannot be seen or heard: do but look up.

GLOU. Alack, I have no eyes.
Is wretchedness deprived that benefit,
To end itself by death? 'T was yet some comfort,
When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage
And frustrate his proud will.

EDG. Give me your arm:
Up: so. How is't? Feel you your legs? You stand.

GLOU. Too well, too well.

EDG. This is above all strangeness.
Upon the crown o' the cliff, what thing was that
Which parted from you?

GLOU. A poor unfortunate beggar.

EDG. As I stood here below, methought his eyes
Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,

53 *Ten masts at each*] Ten masts fastened end to end.

57 *this chalky bourn*] this boundary of chalk.

58 *shrill-gorged*] shrill-throated.

KING LEAR

ACT IV

Horns whelk'd and waved like the enridged sea:
It was some fiend; therefore, thou happy father,
Think that the clearest gods, who make them honours
Of men's impossibilities, have preserved thee.

GLOU. I do remember now: henceforth I'll bear
Affliction till it do cry out itself
"Enough, enough," and die. That thing you speak of,
I took it for a man; often 't would say
"The fiend, thè fiend:" he led me to that place.

EDG. Bear free and patient thoughts. But who comes
here?

80

Enter LEAR, fantastically dressed with wild flowers

The safer sense will ne'er accommodate
His master thus.

LEAR. No, they cannot touch me for coining; I am
the king himself.

EDG. O thou side-piercing sight!

LEAR. Nature's above art in that respect. There's
your press-money. That fellow handles his bow like a

71 *whelk'd and waved . . . sea*] twisted or convolved (like the shell of the
whelk fish) and fluted like the furrowed sea.

73 *clearest*] most pure or righteous.

74 *impossibilities*] incapacities, things that men's powers make it impos-
sible for them to do.

80 *free*] free from fear.

81-82 *The safer sense . . . thus*] The saner sense or the reason would
never allow one in full possession of it to dress himself up thus. "His
master" would be in modern grammar "its master."

85 *side-piercing*] piercing the heart.

86-87 *There's your press-money*] Lear imagines himself a recruiting officer
handing bounty money to men forcibly impressed.

crow-keeper; draw me a clothier's yard. Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace; this piece of toasted cheese will do 't. There's my gauntlet; I'll prove it on a giant.⁹⁰ Bring up the brown bills. O, well flown, bird! i' the clout, i' the clout: hewgh! Give the word.

EDG. Sweet marjoram.

LEAR. Pass.

GLOU. I know that voice.

LEAR. Ha! Goneril, with a white beard! They flattered me like a dog, and told me I had white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there. To say "ay" and "no" to every thing that I said! "Ay" and "no"⁹⁹ too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once and the wind to make me chatter; when the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words: they told me I was every thing; 't is a lie, I am not ague-proof.

88 *crow-keeper*] scarecrow; an office sometimes filled by a loutish boy; more often by a clumsy figure resembling a man.

draw me a clothier's yard] shoot an arrow the length of a clothier's yard measure. "Me" is the ethic dative.

90 *gauntlet*] the leather glove commonly thrown down to invite a challenge.

91 *the brown bills*] the halberdiers, soldiers bearing halberds, which were painted brown to preserve them from rust.

well flown, bird!] the falconer's cry to the hawk.

92 *i' the clout*] the cry of the archer who hit the "clout" i. e., the bull's eye or pin fixed in the centre of the butt or target.

Give the word] The mad king imagines himself a sentinel demanding the watchword of Edgar.

99-100 "Ay" and "no" . . . *divinity*] Merely to echo my "yes" and "no" had nothing that was good or divine in it. It was mere sycophancy.

KING LEAR

ACT IV

GLOU. The trick of that voice I do well remember:
Is 't not the king?

LEAR. Ay, every inch a king:
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.
I pardon that man's life. What was thy cause?
Adultery?

110

Thou shalt not die: die for adultery! No:
The wren goes to 't, and the small gilded fly
Does lecher in't my sight.
Let copulation thrive; for Gloucester's bastard son
Was kinder to his father than my daughters
Got 'tween the lawful sheets.
To 't, luxury, pell-mell! for I lack soldiers.
Behold yond simpering dame,
Whose face between her forks presages snow,
That minces virtue and does shake the head
To hear of pleasure's name;
The fitchew, nor the soiled horse, goes to 't
With a more riotous appetite.

120

106 *trick*] peculiar note.

109 *thy cause*] the charge brought against thee.

117 *luxury*] lust.

119 *Whose face . . . snow*] Cf. *Tim. of Ath.*, IV, iii, 383-384: "Whose blush doth thaw the consecrated snow That lies on Dian's lap." Lear means that the person of the "simpering dame" suggests coyness. "Forks" is equivalent to "legs"; cf. III, iv, 107, *supra*: "a *forked* animal."

120 *minces*] affects with pretence of timidity.

122 *fitchew*] polecat, often applied to a harlot.

the soiled horse] the horse turned out to new grass, which rendered him wanton.

Down from the waist they are Centaurs,
 Though women all above:
 But to the girdle do the gods inherit,
 Beneath is all the fiends';
 There's hell, there's darkness, there's the sulphurous pit,
 Burning, scalding, stench, consumption; fie, fie, fie!
 pah, pah! Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary,
 to sweeten my imagination: there's money for thee. 131

GLOU. O, let me kiss that hand!

LEAR. Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

GLOU. O ruin'd piece of nature! This great world
 Shall so wear out to nought. Dost thou know me?

LEAR. I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost
 thou squiny at me? No, do thy worst, blind Cupid; I'll
 not love. Read thou this challenge; mark but the pen-
 ning on't.

GLOU. Were all the letters suns, I could not see one.

EDG. I would not take this from report: it is, 141
 And my heart breaks at it.

LEAR. Read.

GLOU. What, with the case of eyes?

LEAR. O, ho, are you there with me? No eyes in
 your head, nor no money in your purse? Your eyes are

124 *Centaurs*] used as the type of sensuality. The Centaurs, according to Ovid, *Metam.*, XII, 210, *seq.*, were given up to lust and violence.

126 *do the gods inherit*] do the gods possess or own.

130 *civet*] a musky perfume, obtained from the glands of the civet cat. Cf. III, iv, 103-104: "thou owest . . . the cat no perfume."

137 *squiny*] look askint.

144 *with the case of eyes*] with the sockets which once held eyes.

145 *are you there with me?*] do you understand me?

in a heavy case, your purse in a light: yet you see how this world goes.

GLOU. I see it feelingly. 149

LEAR. What, art mad? A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears: see how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark, in thine ear: change places, and, handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief? Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

GLOU. Ay, sir.

LEAR. And the creature run from the cur? There thou mightst behold the great image of authority: a dog's obeyed in office.

Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand! 160

Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back;

Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind

For which thou whip'st her. The usurer hangs the cozener.

Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;

Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,

147 *a heavy case*] a sad plight.

153 *handy-dandy*] a children's game; sleight of hand in which a thing is rapidly changed from one hand to the other, to the confusion of the onlooker.

163 *The usurer hangs the cozener*] The magistrate, who practises usury, sentences to death the swindler.

164 *small vices*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *great vices*, which may give the passage the difficult meaning that vice is always greater when seen through tatters.

165 *furr'd gowns*] For this reference to the merchant-alderman's official dress, cf. *Meas. for Meas.*, III, ii, 7.

165-170 *Plate sin . . . accuser's lips*] This passage is omitted from the Quartos, and appears only in the Folios.

And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
 Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it.
 None does offend, none, I say, none; I'll able 'em:
 Take that of me, my friend, who have the power
 To seal the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes, 170
 And, like a scurvy politician, seem
 To see the things thou dost not.
 Now, now, now, now: pull off my boots: harder, harder:
 so.

EDG. O, matter and impertinency mix'd!
 Reason in madness!

LEAR. If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes.
 I know thee well enough; thy name is Gloucester:
 Thou must be patient; we came crying hither:
 Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air, 180
 We wawl and cry. I will preach to thee: mark.

GLOU. Alack, alack the day!

LEAR. When we are born, we cry that we are come
 To this great stage of fools. This 's a good block.
 It were a delicate stratagem, to shoe
 A troop of horse with felt: I'll put 't in proof;

168 *I'll able 'em*] I'll answer or vouch for them.

171 *politician*] political intriguer; always used in a depreciatory sense by Shakespeare.

175 *impertinency*] irrelevancy.

181 *wawl*] wail or howl.

184 *This's a good block*] All the old editions read substantially *This a good block*. The sentence is difficult. "Block" is frequently used for the mould on which a hat is fashioned, and thus for the hat itself. Lear may be supposed crazily to snatch a hat from the head of a bystander, and, then noticing that it is made of felt, to be led to his next reflection.

KING LEAR

ACT IV

And when I have stol'n upon these sons-in-law,
Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!

Enter a Gentleman, with Attendants

GENT. O, here he is: lay hand upon him. Sir,
Your most dear daughter — 190

LEAR. No rescue? What, a prisoner? I am even
The natural fool of fortune. Use me well;
You shall have ransom. Let me have a surgeon;
I am cut to the brains.

GENT. You shall have any thing.

LEAR. No seconds? all myself?
Why, this would make a man a man of salt,
To use his eyes for garden water-pots,
Ay, and laying autumn's dust.

GENT. Good sir, —

LEAR. I will die bravely, like a smug bridegroom.
What! 200

I will be jovial: come, come; I am a king,
My masters, know you that.

GENT. You are a royal one, and we obey you.

LEAR. Then there's life in 't. Nay, an you get it,
you shall get it by running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.

[Exit running; Attendants follow.]

GENT. A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch,

196 *salt*] salt tears.

200 *I will die . . . bridegroom*] Cf. *Ant. & Cleop.*, IV, xiv, 99–100: “I will be *A bridegroom in my death*.” “*Smug*” means spruce, without any depreciatory sense. Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, III, i, 39: “so *smug* upon the mart.”

205 *Sa, sa, sa, sa*] These syllables represent Lear's panting as he runs. They are omitted from the Quartos.

Past speaking of in a king! Thou hast one daughter,
 Who redeems nature from the general curse
 Which twain have brought her to.

EDG. Hail, gentle sir.

GENT. Sir, speed you: what's your will?

EDG. Do you hear aught, sir, of a battle toward? 211

GENT. Most sure and vulgar: every one hears that,
 Which can distinguish sound.

EDG. But, by your favour,
 How near's the other army?

GENT. Near and on speedy foot; the main descry
 Stands on the hourly thought.

EDG. I thank you, sir: that's all.

GENT. Though that the queen on special cause is here,
 Her army is moved on.

EDG. I thank you, sir. [Exit Gent.]

GLOU. You ever-gentle gods, take my breath from me;
 Let not my worser spirit tempt me again 220
 To die before you please!

EDG. Well pray you, father.

GLOU. Now, good sir, what are you?

EDG. A most poor man, made tame to fortune's
 blows;

212 *vulgar*] generally known.

215-216 *the main descry . . . hourly thought*] it is expected every hour
 that the main army will be descried. For another usage of "stand
 on," see V, i, 68-69, *infra*.

221 *father*] a colloquial term of address of a young to an old man. Cf.
 line 257, *infra*. Gloucester has not yet recognised his son in Edgar.

223 *tame to*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *lame by*, with which
 compare *Sonnet xxxvii*, 3: "So I made lame by fortune's dearest spite."

ACT IV

GLOU. Hearty thanks;
The bounty and the benison of heaven
To boot, and boot!

Enter OSWALD

GLOU. Now let thy friendly hand
Put strength enough to 't. *[Edgar interposes.]*

EDG. Chill not let go, zir, without vurther 'casion.

Osw. Let go, slave, or thou diest!

EDG. Good gentleman, go your gait, and let poor volk pass. An chud ha' been zwaggered out of my life,

224-225 *by the art . . . pregnant*] by the tuition of experienced and heart-felt sorrows am readily moved.

226 *bidinq*] lodging.

228 *To boot, and boot*] In addition, and addition; to the fullest possible extent.

231 *Briefly thyself remember*] Quickly recall thy sins and repent.

234 *publish'd*] proclaimed.

237 *Chill*] I will. This south country rustic dialect is ordinarily allotted to rustics on the contemporary stage.

't would not ha' been zo long as 't is by a vortnight. Nay, come not near th' old man; keep out, che vor ye, or I'se try whether your costard or my ballow be the harder: chill be plain with you.

OSW. Out, dunghill!

[*They fight.* 245

EDG. Chill pick your teeth, zir: come; no matter vor your foins.

[*Oswald falls.*

OSW. Slave, thou hast slain me. Villain, take my purse: If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body;

And give the letters which thou find'st about me 250

To Edmund earl of Gloucester; seek him out

Upon the British party. O, untimely death!

Death!

[*Dies.*

EDG. I know thee well: a serviceable villain,
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress
As badness would desire.

GLOU.

What, is he dead?

EDG. Sit you down, father; rest you.

242 *che vor ye*] I warn you.

243 *your costard or my ballow*] your head or my cudgel.

245 *Out, dunghill*] a common term of opprobrium. Cf. *K. John*, IV, iii, 87: "Out dunghill, darest thou brave a nobleman?"

247 *foins*] thrusts in fencing. Cf. *Much Ado*, V, i, 84: "*joining fence.*"

252 *Upon the British party*] Among the British. The Quartos read *British*, while the Folios read *English*. Cf. III, iv, 180, *supra*, where "a *British* man" is read in a passage quoted from an old ballad, which has "*Englishman.*" Owing to the accession of James I to the English throne, it was deemed complimentary to the Scottish king to give all his subjects the epithet *British*, and Shakespeare in first drafting the play seems to have respected this punctilio.

255 *duteous*] obsequious, obedient.

257 *father*] See note on line 221, *supra*.

Let 's see these pockets: the letters that he speaks of
 May be my friends. He 's dead; I am only sorry
 He had no other deathsmen. Let us see: 260
 Leave, gentle wax; and, manners, blame us not:
 To know our enemies' minds, we 'ld rip their hearts;
 Their papers, is more lawful.

[*Reads*] "Let our reciprocal vows be remembered. You have many opportunities to cut him off: if your will want not, time and place will be fruitfully offered. There is nothing done, if he return the conqueror: then am I the prisoner, and his bed my gaol; from the loathed warmth whereof deliver me, and supply the place for your labour.

"Your — wife, so I would say — affectionate servant,
 "GONERIL." 270

O undistinguish'd space of woman's will!
 A plot upon her virtuous husband's life;
 And the exchange my brother! Here, in the sands,
 Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified
 Of murderous lechers; and in the mature time
 With this ungracious paper strike the sight
 Of the death-practised duke: for him 't is well
 That of thy death and business I can tell.

260 *deathsmen*] executioner.

261 *Leave, gentle wax*] Cf. *Tw. Night*, II, v, 85: "By your leave, wax."

269 *servant*] lover, as in the Italian "(cavaliere) servente." Cf. *Two Gent.*, II, i, 97.

271 *undistinguish'd . . . will*] boundless range of woman's desire. "Will" is constantly used by Shakespeare in the significance of lust. Cf. Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*, Appendix VIII.

274 *rake up*] cover.

277 *death-practised*] whose death is plotted.

GLOU. The king is mad: how stiff is my vile sense,
 That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling 280
 Of my huge sorrows! Better I were distract:
 So should my thoughts be sever'd from my griefs,
 And woes by wrong imaginations lose
 The knowledge of themselves. [Drum afar off.]

EDG. Give me your hand:
 Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum:
 Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend. [Exeunt.]

SCENE VII — A TENT IN THE FRENCH CAMP. LEAR
 ON A BED ASLEEP, SOFT MUSIC PLAYING;
 GENTLEMAN, AND OTHERS ATTENDING

Enter CORDELIA, KENT, and Doctor

COR. O thou good Kent, how shall I live and work,
 To match thy goodness? My life will be too short,
 And every measure fail me.

280 *ingenious feeling*] lively consciousness.

283 *by wrong imaginations*] by dint of crazy misapprehensions.

Sc. vii (stage direction) *A Tent . . . and Doctor*] These directions are mainly due to Capell. The original editions only indicate here the entrance of Cordelia, with whom the Quartos associate *Kent and Doctor*, and the Folios, *Kent and Gentleman*. The Quartos give no indication at all of Lear's entry, which the Folios do not note until line 20, *infra* (see note). The Folios give to the "Gentleman" the speeches assigned to the "Doctor" by the Quartos. The Quartos specifically allot but one speech (lines 23-25, *infra*) to the "Gentleman," whose presence their stage direction fails to indicate. The first draft of the piece doubtless introduced both a Gentleman and a Doctor in consultation with Cordelia and Kent; a revision of the play made the two parts one.

KENT. To be acknowledged, madam, is o'erpaid.
All my reports go with the modest truth,
Nor more nor clipp'd, but so.

COR. Be better suited:
These weeds are memories of those worser hours:
I prithee, put them off.

KENT. Pardon me, dear madam;
Yet to be known shortens my made intent:
My boon I make it, that you know me not 10
Till time and I think meet.

COR. Then be 't so, my good lord. [*To the Doctor*] How
does the king?

DOCT. Madam, sleeps still.

COR. O you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature!
The untuned and jarring senses, O, wind up
Of this child-changed father!

DOCT. So please your majesty
That we may wake the king: he hath slept long.

COR. Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed 20
I' the sway of your own will. Is he array'd?

6 *Nor more nor clipp'd, but so*] neither exaggerated nor curtailed, but just
the truth.

suitet] dressed.

9 *Yet to be known . . . intent*] Yet to be recognised comes short of, pre-
vents, the due realisation of my deliberately formed aim. *Main* is
sometimes substituted for the somewhat awkward word *made*. But
the change is not essential.

17 *child-changed*] either "changed to a child" or "changed by the conduct
of his children."

20 *Is he array'd?*] The Folios insert here the stage direction, *Enter Lear
in a chaire carried by Seruants*.

GENT. Ay, madam; in the heaviness of his sleep
We put fresh garments on him.

DOCT. Be by, good madam, when we do awake him;
I doubt not of his temperance.

COR. Very well.

DOCT. Please you, draw near. Louder the music there!

COR. O my dear father! Restoration hang
Thy medicine on my lips, and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made!

KENT. Kind and dear princess!

COR. Had you not been their father, these white flakes so
Had challenged pity of them. Was this a face
To be opposed against the warring winds?
To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick, cross lightning? to watch — poor perdu! —

23-24 DOCT. *Be by, . . . temperance*] The Folios continue this speech to the "Gentleman." The First Quarto, which like the other Quartos gives the preceding speech to the "Doctor," assigns this to the "Gentleman," who is not otherwise known to the Quarto text. The Second and Third Quartos allot the passage to Kent.

24 *temperance*] sanity, calmness.

24-25 *Very well . . . music there!*] These lines, which appear in the Quartos, are omitted from the Folios.

26-27 *Restoration . . . lips*] Let the curative or restorative powers hang medicine for thee on my lips.

30 *white flakes*] snow-white hair.

33-36 *To stand . . . helm?*] This passage is omitted from the Folios, and appears only in the Quartos.

35 *perdu*] Cotgrave explains "enfants perdus" or "perdus" as a "forlorn hope of a campe," i. e., soldiers intrusted with very perilous service.

KING LEAR

ACT IV

With this thin helm? Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire; and wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn,
In short and musty straw? Alack, alack! 40
'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all. He wakes; speak to him.

DOCT. Madam, do you; 't is fittest.

COR. How does my royal lord? How fares your
majesty?

LEAR. You do me wrong to take me out o' the grave:
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.

COR. Sir, do you know me?

LEAR. You are a spirit, I know: when did you die?

COR. Still, still, far wide! 50

DOCT. He's scarce awake: let him alone awhile.

LEAR. Where have I been? Where am I? Fair
daylight?

I am mightily abused. I should e'en die with pity,

The term here applies to a sentinel in a situation of great danger who was often so designated. Cf. Beaumont & Fletcher's *The Little French Lawyer*, II, iii, 3-4: "I am set here like a *perdu* To watch a fellow."

36 *Mine enemy's dog*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *mine incurious dog*.

40 *short*] scanty, insufficient.

50 *wide*] astray.

53 *mightily abused*] terribly deceived or imposed upon. Cf. line 77, *infra*, and *Much Ado*, V, ii, 84: "the prince and Claudio *mightily abused*."

To see another thus. I know not what to say.
 I will not swear these are my hands: let's see;
 I feel this pin prick. Would I were assured
 Of my condition!

COR. O, look upon me, sir,
 And hold your hands in benediction o'er me.
 No, sir, you must not kneel.

LEAR. Pray, do not mock me:
 I am a very foolish fond old man, 60
 Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less;
 And, to deal plainly,
 I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
 Methinks I should know you and know this man;
 Yet I am doubtful; for I am mainly ignorant
 What place this is, and all the skill I have
 Remembers not these garments, nor I know not
 Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me;
 For, as I am a man, I think this lady
 To be my child Cordelia.

COR. And so I am, I am. 70

LEAR. Be your tears wet? yes, faith. I pray, weep
 not:

If you have poison for me, I will drink it.
 I know you do not love me; for your sisters
 Have, as I do remember, done me wrong:
 You have some cause, they have not.

COR. No cause, no cause.

61-62 *Fourscore . . . plainly*] The Quartos omit the words *not an hour more or less*, and read the rest as a single line. The words, which the Quartos omit, valuably illustrate Lear's continued mental weakness.

KING LEAR

ACT IV

LEAR. Am I in France?

KENT. In your own kingdom, sir.

LEAR. Do not abuse me.

DOCT. Be comforted, good madam: the great rage,
You see, is kill'd in him: and yet it is danger
To make him even o'er the time he has lost. 80
Desire him to go in; trouble him no more
Till further settling.

COR. Will 't please your highness walk?

LEAR. You must bear with me. Pray you now,
forget and forgive: I am old and foolish.

[Exeunt all but Kent and Gentleman.]

GENT. Holds it true, sir, that the Duke of Cornwall
was so slain?

KENT. Most certain, sir.

GENT. Who is conductor of his people?

KENT. As 't is said, the bastard son of Gloucester. 90

GENT. They say Edgar, his banished son, is with the
Earl of Kent in Germany.

KENT. Report is changeable. 'Tis time to look
about; the powers of the kingdom approach apace.

77 *abuse*] deceive. Cf. line 53, *supra*, and note.

79-80 *and yet . . . lost*] These words are omitted from the Folios.

80 *even o'er*] account for, bridge over in his recollection. "Make even
with" was commonly used for "settle up with." Cf. *Macb.*, V,
viii, 62.

82 *Till further settling*] Till he be calmer. The word "settling" is in
harmony with "even o'er" of line 80.

83 *walk*] withdraw.

86-98 *Holds it true . . . battle's fought*] This passage is omitted from
the Folios.

GENT. The arbitrement is like to be bloody. Fare
you well, sir. [Exit.

KENT. My point and period will be thoroughly
wrought,
Or well or ill, as this day's battle's fought. [Exit.

97-98 *My point and period . . . fought*] The aim and end of my life will
be fully attained for either good or ill in the course of this day's
battle.

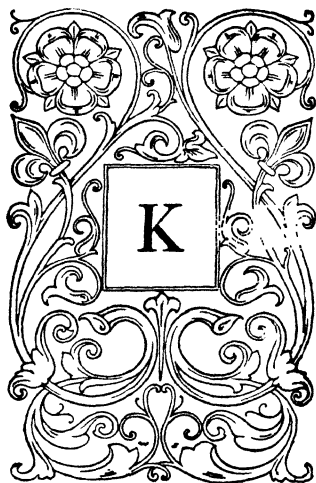


ACT FIFTH — SCENE I

THE BRITISH CAMP NEAR DOVER

Enter, with drum and colours, EDMUND, REGAN, Gentlemen, and Soldiers

EDMUND



NOW OF THE DUKE IF
his last purpose hold,
Or whether since he is advised
by aught
To change the course: he's full
of alteration
And self-reproving: bring his
constant pleasure.

[To a Gentleman, who goes out.]

REG. Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

EDM. 'Tis to be doubted, madam.

REG. Now, sweet lord,
You know the goodness I intend upon you:

4 *constant pleasure*] settled decision.

6 *doubted*] feared.

7 *I intend upon you*] I design for you.

Tell me, but truly, but then speak the truth,
Do you not love my sister?

EDM. In honour'd love.

REG. But have you never found my brother's way 10
To the forfended place?

EDM. That thought abuses you.

REG. I am doubtful that you have been conjunct
And bosom'd with her, as far as we call hers.

EDM. No, by mine honour, madam. •

REG. I never shall endure her: dear my lord,
Be not familiar with her.

EDM. Fear me not. —
She and the duke her husband!

Enter, with drum and colours, ALBANY, GONERIL, and Soldiers

GON. [*Aside*] I had rather lose the battle than that
sister
Should loosen him and me.

ALB. Our very loving sister, well be-met. 20
Sir, this I hear; the king is come to his daughter,
With others whom the rigour of our state
Forced to cry out. Where I could not be honest,
I never yet was valiant: for this business,
It toucheth us, as France invades our land,

11 *forfended*] forbidden.

11-13 *That thought . . . call hers*] This passage is omitted from the Folios.

15 *I never . . . her*] I shall never submit to her capture of you.

23-28 *Where I could not be . . . you speak nobly*] These lines are
omitted from the Quartos.

25-26 *It toucheth . . . the king*] It concerns us, inasmuch as the French
force is invading our territory, not because our French foe is sup-

KING LEAR

ACT V

Not bolts the king, with others, whom, I fear,
Most just and heavy causes make oppose.

EDM. Sir, you speak nobly.

REG. Why is this reason'd?

GON. Combine together 'gainst the enemy;

For these domestic and particular broils

30

Are not the question here.

ALB.

Let's then determine

With the ancient of war on our proceedings.

EDM. I shall attend you presently at your tent.

REG. Sister, you'll go with us?

GON. No.

REG. 'Tis most convenient; pray you, go with us.

GON. [*Aside*] O, ho, I know the riddle. — I will go.

As they are going out, enter EDGAR disguised

EDG. If e'er your grace had speech with man so poor,
Hear me one word.

ALB.

I'll overtake you. Speak.

[*Exeunt all but Albany and Edgar.*

EDG. Before you fight the battle, ope this letter. 40
If you have victory, let the trumpet sound

porting King Lear. "Bolts" is used as a transitive verb meaning "encourages," "supports."

28 *reason'd*] discussed, talked about.

30 *particular broils*] private broils. Thus substantially the Folios. The Quartos read *door* (*dore* or *doore*) *particulars*, which is doubtfully explained as private affairs or business, at our own doors, or homes.

The Quarto reading looks like a misprint.

32 *ancient of war*] military veterans, those of long experience in warfare.

33 *I shall . . . tent*] This line is omitted from the Folios.

37 *I know the riddle*] I know your game.

For him that brought it: wretched though I seem,
 I can produce a champion that will prove
 What is avouched there. If you miscarry,
 Your business of the world hath so an end,
 And machination ceases. Fortune love you!

ALB. Stay till I have read the letter.

EDG. I was forbid it.

When time shall serve, let but the herald cry,
 And I'll appear again.

ALB. Why, fare thee well: I will o'erlook thy paper. 50
[Exit Edgar.]

Re-enter EDMUND

EDM. The enemy's in view: draw up your powers.
 Here is the guess of their true strength and forces
 By diligent discovery; but your haste
 Is now urged on you.

ALB. We will greet the time. *[Exit.]*

EDM. To both these sisters have I sworn my love;
 Each jealous of the other, as the stung
 Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?
 Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoy'd,
 If both remain alive: to take the widow
 Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril; 60
 And hardly shall I carry out my side,

46 *machination ceases*] the plot or intrigue against you concludes (with your death).

54 *We will greet the time*] We will welcome the occasion, we shall be ready.

61 *carry out my side*] win my game. "Side" is often found as a technical term for a set of partners in a game played by two or more players, and hence was sometimes applied to the game itself or to a bout of play.

KING LEAR

ACT V

Her husband being alive. Now then we'll use
His countenance for the battle; which being done,
Let her who would be rid of him devise
His speedy taking off. As for the mercy
Which he intends to Lear and to Cordelia,
The battle done, and they within our power,
Shall never see his pardon; for my state
Stands on me to defend, not to debate. [Exit.

SCENE II — A FIELD BETWEEN THE TWO CAMPS

*Alarum within. Enter, with drum and colours, LEAR, CORDELIA,
and Soldiers, over the stage; and exeunt*

Enter EDGAR and GLOUCESTER

EDG. Here, father, take the shadow of this tree
For your good host; pray that the right may thrive:
If ever I return to you again,
I'll bring you comfort.

GLOU. Grace go with you, sir! [Exit Edgar.

Alarum and retreat within. Re-enter EDGAR

EDG. Away, old man; give me thy hand; away!

68-69 *my state . . . debate*] my situation imposes on me the need of active defence, not of talk. For a cognate, although not identical use of "Stands on," cf. IV, vi, 216, *supra*. See also "Stand in," III, vi, 95-100, *supra*.

5 (stage direction) *Alarum . . . EDGAR*] Thus substantially the Folios. *Within. Re-enter EDGAR* are words omitted by the Quartos. This slight and inadequate indication of the battle, in which the Duke of Albany overcomes the French invaders, has been treated by many critics as a serious blemish in the perspicuous development of the

King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en :
Give me thy hand ; come on.

GLOU. No further, sir ; a man may rot even here.

EDG. What, in ill thoughts again ? Men must endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither : 10
Ripeness is all : come on.

GLOU. And that's true too. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III—THE BRITISH CAMP NEAR DOVER

*Enter, in conquest, with drum and colours, EDMUND ; LEAR and
CORDELIA, as prisoners ; Captain, Soldiers, etc.*

EDM. Some officers take them away : good guard,
Until their greater pleasures first be known
That are to censure them.

COR. We are not the first
Who with best meaning have incurr'd the worst.
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down ;
Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown.
Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters ?

LEAR. No, no, no, no ! Come, let's away to prison :
We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage :
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down 10
And ask of thee forgiveness : so we'll live,

plot. The sympathies of the audience which are already strained to the uttermost on behalf of the suffering Lear and Cordelia, could, however ill endure any emphasis being laid on the defeat of the French champion of Cordelia and her father.

11 *Ripeness is all*] Cf. *Hamlet*, V, ii, 214: "if it be not now yet it will come; the readiness is all."

2-3 *their greater pleasures . . . That are to censure them*] the pleasures or commands of those greater persons who are to judge them.

And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
 At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
 Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too,
 Who loses and who wins, who's in, who's out;
 And take upon's the mystery of things,
 As if we were God's spies: and we'll wear out,
 In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones
 That ebb and flow by the moon.

EDM.

Take them away.

LEAR. Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia, 20
 The gods themselves throw incense. Have I caught thee?
 He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven,
 And fire us hence like foxes. Wipe thine eyes;
 The good-years shall devour them, flesh and fell,

13 *gilded butterflies*] fashionable courtiers.

16 *take upon's*] undertake inquiry into.

17 *God's spies*] angels commissioned by God to report on the lives of men.

18 *packs and sects*] parties and factions (of politicians).

23 *fire us hence like foxes*] drive us away as foxes are expelled from their holes by burning them out. Cf. *Sonnet* cxliv, 14: "Till my bad angel fire my good one out," and Guilpin's *Skialetheia*, 1598 (ed. Grosart, p. 17): "But Ile be loth, wench, to be *fired out*."

24 *The good-years*] There is no justification for Hanmer's generally accepted suggestion that this expression was a corruption of a French word "*goujères*" which meant venereal diseases. No such French word exists. The colloquial phrase "what the goodyear!" is common in Elizabethan English as an imprecation equivalent to "What the devil?" and suggests that "good year" was popularly used, by an ironical inversion of speech, of any maleficent influence. See note on *M. Wives*, I, iv, 110. "The good years" doubtless means here "the bad powers."

flesh and fell] literally "flesh and skin"; colloquially used for "flesh and bones."

Ere they shall make us weep: we'll see 'em starve first.

Come. *[Exeunt Lear and Cordelia, guarded.]*

EDM. Come hither, captain; hark.

Take thou this note: go follow them to prison:

One step I have advanced thee; if thou dost

As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way 30

To noble fortunes: know thou this, that men

Are as the time is: to be tender-minded

Does not become a sword: thy great employment

Will not bear question; either say thou'lt do't,

Or thrive by other means.

CAPT. I'll do't, my lord.

EDM. About it; and write happy when thou hast
done.

Mark; I say, instantly, and carry it so

As I have set it down.

CAPT. I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats;

If it be man's work, I'll do't. *[Exit. 40]*

*Flourish. Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, another Captain, and
Soldiers*

ALB. Sir, you have shown to-day your valiant strain,
And fortune led you well: you have the captives
That were the opposites of this day's strife:

28 *this note*] the warrant for the execution of Lear and Cordelia.

34 *Will not bear question*] Will not admit of discussion.

36 *write happy*] deem yourself fortunate.

39-40 *I cannot draw . . . do't*] These lines are omitted from the Folios.

41 *strain*] lineage.

43 *the opposites*] the persons opposed to us, our enemies.

KING LEAR

ACT V

We do require them of you, so to use them
As we shall find their merits and our safety
May equally determine.

EDM. Sir, I thought it fit
To send the old and miserable king
To some retention and appointed guard;
Whose age has charms in it, whose title more,
To pluck the common bosom on his side, 50
And turn our impress'd lances in our eyes
Which do command them. With him I sent the queen:
My reason all the same; and they are ready
To-morrow or at further space to appear
Where you shall hold your session. At this time
We sweat and bleed: the friend hath lost his friend;
And the best quarrels, in the heat, are cursed
By those that feel their sharpness.
The question of Cordelia and her father
Requires a fitter place.

ALB. Sir, by your patience, 60
I hold you but a subject of this war,
Not as a brother.

REG. That's as we list to grace him.

48 *retention*] confinement.

50 *the common bosom*] the heart of the common people.

51 *our impress'd lances*] weapons of the men we have impressed into our service.

55-60 *At this time . . . fitter place*] This passage is omitted from the Folios.

57-58 *And the best quarrels . . . sharpness*] And those engaged in wars even when waged in the justest of causes curse the quarrel in the excitement of the moment, when they suffer the bitter consequences, (either from loss of friends or by reason of their own wounds).

Methinks our pleasure might have been demanded,
 Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers,
 Bore the commission of my place and person;
 The which immediacy may well stand up
 And call itself your brother.

GON. Not so hot:
 In his own grace he doth exalt himself
 More than in your addition.

REG. In my rights,
 By me invested, he compeers the best.

70

GON. That were the most, if he should husband you.

REG. Jesters do oft prove prophets.

GON. Holla, holla!
 That eye that told you so look'd but a-squint.

REG. Lady, I am not well; else I should answer
 From a full-flowing stomach. General,
 Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony;
 Dispose of them, of me; the walls are thine:
 Witness the world, that I create thee here
 My lord and master.

66 *The which immediacy*] Such intimate association with my "place and person." Cf. *Hamlet*, I, ii, 109: "the most *immediate* to our throne."

69 *in your addition*] by virtue of the title with which you invest him.

73 *That eye . . . a-squint*] Cf. Ray's *English Proverbs*: "Love being jealous makes a good eye look *a-squint*."

75 *stomach*] anger.

77 *Dispose . . . thine*] This line is omitted from the Quartos, and appears only in the Folios. "The walls are thine" means that Regan surrenders her person as though it were a vanquished citadel. Cf. *Cymb.*, II, i, 60-61: "The heavens hold firm *The walls of thy dear honour*."

KING LEAR

ACT V

GON. Mean you to enjoy him?

ALB. The let-alone lies not in your good will. 80

EDM. Nor in thine, lord.

ALB. Half-blooded fellow, yes.

REG. [*To Edmund*] Let the drum strike, and prove
my title thine.

ALB. Stay yet; hear reason. Edmund, I arrest thee
On capital treason; and in thine attainst
This gilded serpent [*pointing to Gon.*]. For your claim,
fair sister,

I bar it in the interest of my wife;
'Tis she is sub-contracted to this lord,
And I, her husband, contradict your bans.
If you will marry, make your loves to me;
My lady is bespoke.

GON. An interlude! 90

ALB. Thou art arm'd, Gloucester: let the trumpet
sound:

If none appear to prove upon thy person
Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,
There is my pledge [*throwing down a glove*]: I'll prove it
on thy heart,
Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less
Than I have here proclaim'd thee.

REG. Sick, O, sick!

80 *let-alone*] prohibition.

84 *in thine attainst*] in connexion with thy impeachment. Thus the
Quartos. The Folios read less satisfactorily *in thy arrest*.

90 *An interlude!*] A farce is on foot! This sarcastic interruption is omitted
from the Quartos.

94 *prove it*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *make it*.

GON. [*Aside*] If not, I'll ne'er trust medicine.

EDM. [*Throwing down a glove*] There's my exchange:
what in the world he is

That names me traitor, villain-like he lies:
Call by thy trumpet: he that dares approach, 100
On him, on you, — who not? — I will maintain
My truth and honour firmly.

ALB. A herald, ho!

EDM. A herald, ho, a herald!

ALB. Trust to thy single virtue; for thy soldiers,
All levied in my name, have in my name
Took their discharge.

REG. My sickness grows upon me.

ALB. She is not well; convey her to my tent.

[*Exit Regan, led.*]

Enter a Herald

Come hither, herald, — Let the trumpet sound, —
And read out this.

CAPT. Sound, trumpet! [*A trumpet sounds.* 110

HER. [*Reads*] "If any man of quality or degree within the
lists of the army will maintain upon Edmund, supposed Earl of
Gloucester, that he is a manifold traitor, let him appear by the third
sound of the trumpet: he is bold in his defence."

EDM. Sound! [*First trumpet.*

97 *I'll ne'er trust medicine*] Goneril has poisoned her. Cf. line 228, *infra*.

104 *thy single virtue*] thy personal valour.

115 *Sound!*] Thus the Second and Third Quartos. The First Quarto reads
Sound? The Folios omit Edmund's exclamation.

KING LEAR

ACT V

HER. Again!

[*Second trumpet.*

HER. Again!

[*Third trumpet.*

[*Trumpet answers within.*

Enter EDGAR, at the third sound, armed, with a trumpet before him

ALB. Ask him his purposes, why he appears
Upon this call o' the trumpet.

HER. What are you?

Your name, your quality? and why you answer 120
This present summons?

EDG. Know, my name is lost;
By treason's tooth bare-gnawn and canker-bit:
Yet am I noble as the adversary
I come to cope.

ALB. Which is that adversary?

EDG. What's he that speaks for Edmund, Earl of
Gloucester?

EDM. Himself: what say'st thou to him?

EDG. Draw thy sword,
That if my speech offend a noble heart,
Thy arm may do thee justice: here is mine.
Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,
My oath, and my profession: I protest, 130
Maugre thy strength, youth, place and eminence,
Despite thy victor sword and fire-new fortune,

122 *canker-bit*] bitten by the caterpillar, by vermin.

124 *cope*] encounter.

129 *mine honours*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *my tongue*. "Mine honours" probably means "my honourable birth and standing."

Thy valour and thy heart, thou art a traitor,
 False to thy gods, thy brother and thy father,
 Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince,
 And from the extremest upward of thy head
 To the descent and dust below thy foot,
 A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou "No,"
 This sword, this arm and my best spirits are bent
 To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak, 140
 Thou liest.

EDM. In wisdom I should ask thy name,
 But since thy outside looks so fair and warlike
 And that thy tongue some say of breeding breathes,
 What safe and nicely I might well delay
 By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn:
 Back do I toss these treasons to thy head;
 With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart;
 Which for they yet glance by and scarcely bruise.

133 *thy heart*] thy courage.

138 *toad-spotted*] spotted with marks of infamy as numerous as the spots on a toad.

143 *some say*] some assay, taste or smack.

144 *What safe . . . delay*] This line is omitted from the Quartos.

144-145 *What safe . . . knighthood*] That refusal (of your challenge) which I might well and quite accurately make in accordance with the laws of chivalry. "Safe" is often used adverbially; "nicely" is often used for "punctiliously"; "delay" often stands for "refuse." Cf. lines 152-153, *infra*.

146 *Back do I . . . head*] Thus the Folios; the Second and Third Quartos omit the line. The First Quarto reads *Heere do I tosse those treasons to thy head*.

147 *hell-hated*] hated as hell.

This sword of mine shall give them instant way,
Where they shall rest for ever. Trumpets, speak! 150

[*Alarums. They fight. Edmund falls.*]

ALB. Save him, save him!

GON. This is practice, Gloucester:
By the law of arms thou wast not bound to answer
An unknown opposite; thou art not vanquish'd,
But cozen'd and beguiled.

ALB. Shut your mouth, dame,
Or with this paper shall I stop it. Hold, sir;
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil.
No tearing, lady; I perceive you know it.

GON. Say, if I do, the laws are mine, not thine:
Who can arraign me for 't?

ALB. Most monstrous!
Know'st thou this paper? 160

GON. Ask me not what I know. [*Exit.*]

150 *Where they shall rest for ever*] Edmund threatens to drive the treasonable accusations into Edgar's heart with the blow of death.

151 *Save him, save him!*] The involuntary exclamation either illustrates Albany's humanity or expresses Albany's wish to preserve Edmund's life until at least he has confessed the guilt of which the intercepted letter convicts him.

practice] deceitful intrigue.

155 *Hold, sir*] Look, sir. "Hold" is used in much the same sense as "tenez," to arrest attention. The words are omitted from the Quartos.

159 *Most monstrous!*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios insert after these words the exclamation *O*, an impressive groan from Albany at Goneril's insolent confession of her iniquity.

160 GON. *Ask me not what I know.* [*Exit.*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios assign this line to Edmund, marking Goneril's exit after her previous speech (line 159). Seeing that Albany has already elicited from

ALB. Go after her: she's desperate; govern her.

EDM. What you have charged me with, that have
I done;

And more, much more; the time will bring it out:
'T is past, and so am I. But what art thou
That hast this fortune on me? If thou'rt noble,
I do forgive thee.

EDG. Let's exchange charity.

I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund;
If more, the more thou hast wrong'd me.

My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.

The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices

170

Make instruments to plague us:

The dark and vicious place where thee he got
Cost him his eyes.

EDM. Thou hast spoken right, 't is true;
The wheel is come full circle; I am here.

ALB. Methought thy very gait did prophesy
A royal nobleness: I must embrace thee:

Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I
Did hate thee or thy father!

EDG. Worthy prince, I know't.

ALB. Where have you hid yourself?

How have you known the miseries of your father? 180

EDG. By nursing them, my lord. List a brief tale;
And when 't is told, O, that my heart would burst!

Goneril the admission that she knew this paper, it might be thought unnecessary for him to renew his inquiry. But his next speech, "Go after her," etc., suggests that his wife is still addressing him here.

174 *The wheel is come full circle*] Cf. *Tw. Night*, V, i, 363: "The whirligig of time brings in his revenges."

The bloody proclamation to escape
 That follow'd me so near, — O, our lives' sweetness!
 That we the pain of death would hourly die
 Rather than die at once! — taught me to shift
 Into a madman's rags, to assume a semblance
 That very dogs disdain'd: and in this habit
 Met I my father with his bleeding rings,
 Their precious stones new lost; became his guide, 190
 Led him, begg'd for him, saved him from despair;
 Never — O fault! — reveal'd myself unto him,
 Until some half-hour past, when I was arm'd;
 Not sure, though hoping, of this good success,
 I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last
 Told him my pilgrimage: but his flaw'd heart, —
 Alack, too weak the conflict to support! —
 'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
 Burst smilingly.

EDM. This speech of yours hath moved me,
 And shall perchance do good: but speak you on; 200
 You look as you had something more to say.

ALB. If there be more, more woful, hold it in;
 For I am almost ready to dissolve,
 Hearing of this.

EDG. This would have seem'd a period

185–186 *we the pain . . . die at once*] we would suffer every hour the pain
 of death rather than die once for all. Thus the Folios. The Quartos
 read *with the pain* for *we the pain*.

189 *rings*] sockets of the eyes.

203 *dissolve*] shed tears, melt in tears.

204–221 *This would . . . for a slave*] These lines are omitted from the
 Folios. They appear only in the Quartos.

To such as love not sorrow; but another,
 To amplify too much, would make much more,
 And top extremity.
 Whilst I was big in clamour, came there in a man,
 Who, having seen me in my worst estate,
 Shunn'd my abhorr'd society; but then, finding 210
 Who 't was that so endured, with his strong arms
 He fasten'd on my neck, and bellow'd out
 As he'd burst heaven; threw him on my father;
 Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him
 That ever ear received: which in recounting
 His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life
 Began to crack: twice then the trumpets sounded,
 And there I left him tranced.

ALB. But who was this?

EDG. Kent, sir, the banish'd Kent; who in disguise
 Follow'd his enemy king, and did him service 220
 Improper for a slave.

Enter a Gentleman, with a bloody knife

GENT. Help, help, O, help!

EDG. What kind of help?

ALB. Speak, man.

EDG. What means this bloody knife?

GENT. 'T is hot, it smokes;
 It came even from the heart of — O, she's dead!

ALB. Who dead? speak, man.

205–207 *but another . . . extremity*] Any further period or conclusion to my story, by adding sorrow to what is already too much, would substantially increase the pathos and exceed the utmost limits of grief. “To amplify too much” is the gerundial infinitive.

KING LEAR

ACT V

GENT. Your lady, sir, your lady: and her sister
By her is poisoned; she hath confess'd it.

EDM. I was contracted to them both: all three
Now marry in an instant.

EDG. Here comes Kent.

ALB. Produce the bodies, be they alive or dead. 230

[Exit Gentleman.]

This judgement of the heavens, that makes us tremble,
Touches us not with pity.

Enter KENT

O, is this he?
The time will not allow the compliment
Which very manners urges.

KENT. I am come
To bid my king and master aye good night:
Is he not here?

ALB. Great thing of us forgot!
Speak, Edmund, where's the king? and where's
Cordelia?

See'st thou this object, Kent?

[The bodies of Goneril and Regan are brought in.]

KENT. Alack, why thus?

EDM. Yet Edmund was beloved:
The one the other poison'd for my sake, 240
And after slew herself.

226-227 *her sister . . . poisoned*] Cf. line 97, *supra*.

231 *judgement*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *Iustice*.

233-234 *the compliment . . . urges*] the interchange of courtesies which mere good breeding requires. "Manners" is also used thus with the verb in the singular in *Rom. and Jul.*, V, iii, 213.

ALB. Even so. Cover their faces.

EDM. I pant for life: some good I mean to do,
Despise of mine own nature. Quickly send,
Be brief in it, to the castle; for my writ
Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia:
Nay, send in time.

ALB. Run, run, O, run!

EDG. To who, my lord? Who hath the office? send
Thy token of reprieve.

EDM. Well thought on: take my sword, 250
Give it the captain.

ALB. Haste thee, for thy life. [*Exit Edgar.*]

EDM. He hath commission from thy wife and me
To hang Cordelia in the prison, and
To lay the blame upon her own despair,
That she fordid herself.

ALB. The gods defend her! Bear him hence awhile.
[*Edmund is borne off.*]

*Re-enter LEAR, with CORDELIA dead in his arms; EDGAR, Captain,
and others following*

LEAR. Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of
stones:

Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so
That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone for ever:
I know when one is dead and when one lives; 260
She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass;
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,
Why, then she lives.

255 *fordid herself*] destroyed herself. Cf. line 291, *infra*.

262 *the stone*] the mirror of crystal.

KING LEAR

ACT V

KENT. Is this the promised end?

EDG. Or image of that horror?

ALB. Fall and cease.

LEAR. This feather stirs; she lives. If it be so,
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

KENT. [*Kneeling*] O my good master!

LEAR. Prithee, away.

EDG. 'T is noble Kent, your friend.

LEAR. A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!
I might have saved her; now she's gone for ever! 270
Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little. Ha!

What is't thou say'st? Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman.
I kill'd the slave that was a-hanging thee.

CAPT. 'T is true, my lords, he did.

LEAR. Did I not, fellow?
I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion

263-264 *Is this . . . image of that horror*] Kent asks if this is the end allotted to all things, according to Scriptural prophecy. Edgar asks whether it is not rather a premonitory phantasm of the final cataclysm. Cf. *Macb.*, II, iii, 76, where the murder of Duncan is described: "The great doom's image."

264 *Fall and cease*] Probably "Let all things fall and come to an end." Such an exclamation is naturally suggested by the two preceding interrogations. It is just possible (as has been suggested) that "fall" and "cease" are used here as substantives and that the phrase means "(It is) ruin and end (of things)." The speaker, Albany, designates the situation "this great decay" at line 297, *infra*.

265 *This feather stirs*] Cf. 2 *Hen. IV*, IV, v, 31-32: "By his gates of breath There lies a downy *feather* which *stirs* not."

276 *falchion*] scimitar.

I would have made them skip: I am old now,
And these same crosses spoil me. Who are you?
Mine eyes are not o' the best: I'll tell you straight.

KENT. If fortune brag of two she loved and hated, 280
One of them we behold.

LEAR. This is a dull sight. Are you not Kent?

KENT. The same,
Your servant Kent. Where is your servant Caius?

LEAR. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that;
He'll strike, and quickly too: he's dead and rotten.

KENT. No, my good lord; I am the very man —

LEAR. I'll see that straight.

KENT. That from your first of difference and decay
Have follow'd your sad steps.

LEAR. You are welcome hither.

KENT. Nor no man else: all's cheerless, dark and
deadly. 290

278 *crosses*] misadventures.

281 *One of them we behold*] Thus all the early editions. But there is some justification for the conjectural change of *you* or *ye behold* for *we behold*. Kent is explaining to Lear his identity. After suggesting that there are two men of whom fortune may well boast that she has visited them with the full force of both her love and hate, he calls attention to himself as being one of the two. In the next line Lear glimmeringly recognises Kent from this description.

282 *This is a dull sight*] This is a melancholy spectacle which your words suggest. Thus the Folios. The Quartos omit the words. The suggested change *This is a dull sight* in reference to the darkening of Lear's dying eyes is ingenious, but supererogatory.

288 *from your first of difference*] from the first indication of your change of fortune.

290 *Nor no man else*] There is no just cause of welcome for me or anyone else.

KING LEAR

ACT V

Your eldest daughters have fordone themselves,
And desperately are dead.

LEAR. Ay, so I think.

ALB. He knows not what he says, and vain is it
That we present us to him.

EDG. Very bootless.

Enter a Captain

CAPT. Edmund is dead, my lord.

ALB. That's but a trifle here.

You lords and noble friends, know our intent.

What comfort to this great decay may come

Shall be applied: for us, we will resign,

During the life of this old majesty,

To him our absolute power: [*To Edgar and Kent*] you, to
your rights; 300

With boot, and such addition as your honours

Have more than merited. All friends shall taste

The wages of their virtue, and all foes

The cup of their deservings. O, see, see!

LEAR. And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life!

291 [*fordone themselves*] destroyed themselves. Cf. line 255, *supra*.

292 [*desperately*] in the despair of sin which denies them salvation.

297 [*this great decay*] this colossal series of disasters.

304 O, see, see!] Lear moves to embrace the dead body of Cordelia.

305 [*my poor fool*] a common term of endearment, here applied by Lear to Cordelia. The context makes it quite clear that Lear's thoughts are all concentrated on his dead daughter, whose hangman he has just slain (line 274, *supra*), and that he has no word to spare, as has been suggested, for the professional fool who was formerly his companion but disappeared leaving no trace at III, vi, 101.

Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never!

Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir.

Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips, 310

Look there, look there! [Dies.

EDG. He faints. My lord, my lord!

KENT. Break, heart; I prithee, break!

EDG. Look up, my lord.

KENT. Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass! he hates
him

That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

EDG. He is gone indeed.

KENT. The wonder is he hath endured so long:
He but usurp'd his life.

ALB. Bear them from hence. Our present business
Is general woe. [To Kent and Edgar] Friends of my soul,
you twain

Rule in this realm and the gored state sustain. 320

KENT. I have a journey, sir, shortly to go;
My master calls me, I must not say no.

309 *Pray you, undo this button*] A singularly vivid touch, suggesting the
sense of suffocation, which ends a few moments later in Lear's death.

310-311 *Do you see this? . . . look there!*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos
read *O, o, o, o, o.*

321 *I have a journey . . . go*] an often repeated figurative description of
death. Cf. Marlowe's *Edward II*, V, vi, 65-66, where Mortimer says
as he is led to execution that he "as a traveller Goes to discover
countries yet unknown." The most familiar instance is Hamlet's
mention of death (III, i, 79-80) as "the undiscovered country from
whose bourn No traveller returns."

KING LEAR

ACT V

ALB. The weight of this sad time we must obey,
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
The oldest hath borne most: we that are young
Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

[*Exeunt, with a dead march.*]

323-326 ALB. *The weight . . . so long*] The Quartos justly give this
speech to Albany. The Folios awkwardly transfer it to Edgar.

TIMON OF ATHENS

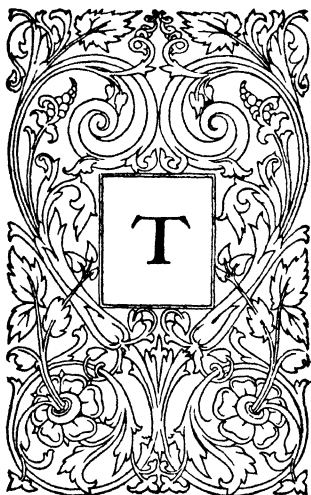
**WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY HERBERT PAUL
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY J. H. F. BACON**

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INTRODUCTION



TO find Shakespeare in "Timon of Athens" is an ingenious exercise, and a not unprofitable expenditure of time. Mr. Lee, than whom there could be no higher authority, assigns to him the first two acts and the fourth, crediting George Wilkins with the third and the fifth. If, as Mr. Lee hints, Wilkins had something to do with that magnificent play "The Yorkshire Tragedy," his dramatic power must have been considerable ; for there is no English playwright except Shakespeare whose fame would not be raised if it were proved that he had written "The Yorkshire Tragedy." As much cannot be said for "Timon of Athens," in which we may feel sure that Shakespeare took very little interest himself. Yet diligent search reveals some faint

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trace of him, and the dust of his writings is gold. The story of the play, which may have been taken from Plutarch, from Lucian, from Painter, or from Boiardo, is singularly crude and displeasing. Timon was a wealthy Athenian citizen of the great days, the generation after Pericles, when the martyrdom of Socrates was still recent and Plato was yet alive. It is perhaps needless to say that local colour will be sought in vain. Just as Shakespeare's Verona contains an alehouse, but no amphitheatre, no market-place, and no tombs of the Scaligers; so in the Athens of Timon there are drums and fifes and other appliances of modern civilisation, but no Acropolis and no Parthenon. The play opens in the true Shakespearean manner, with an easy and natural scene which introduces the subject without the formality of an explanation. Perhaps the best example of Shakespeare's method in this respect is the dialogue between Sampson and Gregory at the beginning of "Romeo and Juliet." Here we have artists and tradesmen waiting for an audience in the hall of Timon's house. Their conversation discloses his manner of life. He is rich, open-handed, liberal, indiscriminate in his generosity, ostentatious though kindly in his patronage. He "passes," that is, he exceeds the common run of men. The painter has made a portrait of him. The poet has written verses in his honour. All men speak well of him, and find their account in flattering him. But even on the threshold of the drama an admonitory note is struck. The poet has feigned Fortune to be throned on a high and pleasant hill, beckoning Timon to her, and multitudes follow

INTRODUCTION

Timon's steps. Then he goes on in lines which we may well accept as Shakespeare's to foreshadow the *μῦθος*, the plot and moral, of the tragedy : —

“When Fortune in her shift and change of mood
Spurns down her late beloved, all his dependants
Which labour'd after him to the mountain's top,
Even on their knees and hands, let him slip down,
Not one accompanying his declining foot.”

These words are uttered significantly enough before Timon appears upon the stage.

He comes on talking to the servant of his old friend Ventidius, imprisoned for debt. The debt will at once be paid, and Timon's kindness will not end there. With a construction, terse and pregnant, which Shakespeare did not know to be Thucydidean, he adds : —

“'Tis not enough to help the feeble up,
But to support him after.”

A further promise on Timon's part to provide a dowry for his servant Lucilius elicits the cynical proverb, appropriate to the story, that honesty is its own reward. Amid a chorus of gross and rather sickening flattery there enters Apemantus, by far the best and most vivid person of the drama. Timon, as will be seen, changes from one extreme to another, — from universal confidence to equally universal distrust. Apemantus never changes at all. He is a cynic from the first, and with him cynicism means the natural shamelessness of the dog, not the acquired indifference of the philosopher.

TIMON OF ATHENS

There is no dignity in him as there is in Diogenes. He represents the merely brute element in human nature, what Zola, whose mind it haunted, called *la bête humaine*. The genius of Shakespeare alone could have made such a character endurable, and yet Shakespeare bestowed, if we may judge by appearances, very little thought or labour upon Apemantus. If we compare the exquisite and inimitable humour which the prodigal master has lavished upon the fool in "Lear," upon the nurse in "Romeo and Juliet," upon Launce in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," upon Master Shallow, upon Mrs. Quickly, or upon Falstaff's ragged retainers, with Apemantus's celebrated and not altogether ignoble grace, it will help us to realise how little Shakespeare cared for his reputation, and how completely he could surrender himself to the whim of the moment. Apemantus, however, has his allotted place in the development of the drama. He gives Timon, who had not heard the speech of the poet, his first warning. The poet's words are meant for the audience; Apemantus addresses Timon himself. He is not heeded because he oversteps the mark. To Apemantus all Athenians are knaves, and that not because they are Athenians, but because they are men. He is wrong in the general, and yet in this particular instance he is right. If Timon can be blamed for ignoring his unrestrained vituperation, it is not because Apemantus was justified in his estimate of mankind, but because the false friends made with the Mammon of unrighteousness, to adapt the scathing irony of the parable, last so long as the means of corruption last, and no longer.

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Timon's friends belonged to the cream of Athenian society. Cream is like scum, it rises to the top. In this very first scene of the play we are introduced to Alcibiades, the most brilliant personage among the public men of that time, the Cæsar of Athens, without moral principle, but equally distinguished in culture and in action, and immortalised by Plato in the most poetical of all philosophic dialogues. But as Dr. Caius most pertinently asked, when he found that "honest man" Master Simple, what the honest man did in his closet, so we may ask what the dazzling disciple of Socrates does in this play. Here he only comes to dine with Timon. How they are afterwards associated we shall see. At the end of the stage-directions for the second scene of the first act is the graphic sentence, "Then comes, dropping after all, Apemantus, discontentedly, like himself." Alcibiades in "Timon of Athens" is emphatically not like himself. He is a rough, frank soldier, a sort of inferior Coriolanus, with no more philosophy than Timon, though he possesses the accomplishment, not unusual at Athens in those days, of being able to read. In this scene, the scene of a very different banquet from that with which the name of Alcibiades will always be connected, he speaks like a Hotspur without his humour. The central figure is neither he nor Timon, but Apemantus, whose railings may be called the second warning of Timon; and yet with the warning there is encouragement, the offer of Ventidius, who has inherited his father's fortune, to repay Timon's loan, "doubled with thanks and service," "doubled" being a

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sign of addition, not of multiplication. At the dinner, when Timon quotes Seneca, as Hector in "Troilus and Cressida" quotes Aristotle, there falls from Apemantus that terrible line

"I wonder men dare trust themselves with men,"

which might serve for the motto of the whole play, the English equivalent of the Latin proverb, *homo homini hepus*, amplified in the following couplet : —

"Methinks they should invite them without knives;
Good for their meat, and safer for their lives."

The grace of Apemantus passes unheeded as the fitting utterance of an enemy to good company and good cheer. So, too, does a passage in Timon's reply to the thanks of his guests, upon which, if the play had been an Athenian one, the quick-witted spectators would at once have fastened. "Why," says the giver of the feast, "I have often wished myself poorer, that I might come nearer to you." This unconscious utterance of a truth unknown to the utterer, by no means characteristically Shakespearean, is the irony of the Greek tragedians. There was one who must have felt the grimness of the fanciful aspiration. Flavius, Timon's steward, is the one sound and honest character in the play. It is his business to provide the materials for his master's bounty. But his master is already in debt, and Flavius is at the end of his resources. He has none of Caleb Balderstone's ingenuity. All he could do was to give his master good advice, which his master never took. The verdict of common sense is wholly unfavourable to Timon, and

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pronounces that he was responsible for his own misfortunes. But the tribunal of common sense is a narrow, and therefore an unjust one. "Every man," said Tennyson, "imputes himself." Apemantus lived in a world of Apemantuses. Because he had no self-respect, he had no respect for others. Timon was not a prudent man, nor even, as the sequel shows, a wise one. Yet was it an unselfish, though a vulgar, error that misled him. He gave, it is true, to those who did not want. He gave because he loved giving. But he never turned his face from any poor man, he never failed to relieve distress, and he could not realise that there were men who would refuse assistance to friends in time of need. The Senator, in the first scene of the second act, utters the precept of common sense, or, in other words, of enlightened selfishness : —

" I love and honour him ;
But must not break my back to heal his finger."

So, like a sensible man, he demands payment at once, lest the other creditors should get beforehand with him. He had received from Timon many gifts; but he does not allow that fact to warp his judgment, and, as a man of the world, he cannot help condemning the wanton extravagance which has brought his benefactor into such a sorry plight. Nevertheless, to paraphrase Shakespeare's words in another case, he was not altogether a wise man nor Timon altogether a fool. As much foolery as one had, so much wisdom the other lacked. Timon was entitled to say : —

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“No villainous bounty yet hath passed my heart ;
Unwisely, not ignobly have I given.”

Therefore he counted that it would be a successful experiment to “try the argument of hearts by borrowing.” Flavius, though an honest man, was under no such illusion. He was honest, but he was not magnanimous, and therefore he understood men as they are better than Timon : —

“Ah, when the means are gone that buy this praise,
The breath is gone whereof this praise is made.”

This praise, not any praise. Flavius is the mean between the cynicism of Apemantus and the idealism of Timon.

The third act, which in the main is almost certainly not Shakespeare's, though it contains Shakespearean touches, describes the bitter disillusionment of Timon, and his rather paltry revenge. All his friends refuse to help him. Even Ventidius, who offered him five talents before, seems, with an unaccountable access of parsimony, to have withheld them now, though this is not expressly stated. The interviews of Timon's servants with these men are extremely repulsive, relieved only here and there by a stroke of humour, as when Lucullus says he has often dined with Timon, “and come again to supper with him, to have him spend less,” or when Lucius confesses that he has “received some small kindnesses from him, as money, plate, jewels, and such-like trifles.” Then follows a scene between Alcibiades and the Senate which is not germane to the matter, but looks as if it had been

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taken from another piece. It is certainly not in the least Shakespearean and is almost wholly devoid of literary merit. Alcibiades pleads for a friend of his, lying under judgment of death for culpable homicide. The Senate reject his plea, and banish his friend. Whereupon he vows vengeance in bombastic language, ending with this precious couplet :—

“T is honour with most lands to be at odds ;
Soldiers should brook as little wrongs as gods.”

Who the friend of Alcibiades was, and what he had done, we are not told. The news of the banishment forms a topic of conversation at the mock feast to which Timon has invited his friends and creditors. But Timon takes no notice of it and apparently does not hear it. In this scene there is what some have taken for a reference to an older play of “Timon” by an unknown author, written about 1600. In the older play, an abominably bad one, the feast is composed of stones painted like artichokes. In our “Timon” the dishes contain only warm water. Yet after Timon has flung the water and the dishes at the heads of his guests, there occurs this elegant dialogue, with which the scene closes :—

“2 *Lord.* Lord Timon’s mad.

3 *Lord.* I feel’t upon my bones.

4 *Lord.* One day he gives us diamonds, next day stones.”

The antithesis would be hard to match for badness, and the allusion to stones has not the slightest point as it stands. This play is botched rather than made, though

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here and there is a purple or Shakespearean patch. There is vigour, though not much else, in the vituperative lines :—

“ Most smiling, smooth, detested parasites,
Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears,
You fools of fortune, trencher-friends, time’s flies,
Cap-and-knee slaves, vapours, and minute-jacks.”

Still it is a fish-fag’s eloquence, and simple swearing would be quite as impressive.

In the fourth act, which Mr. Lee assigns to Shakespeare, Timon has left Athens, and, looking back upon the walls, embraces the whole city in one comprehensive anathema, most of which is mere raving. The following lines are the least unlike Shakespeare’s style :—

“ Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,
Domestic awe, night-rest, and neighbourhood,
Instruction, manners, mysteries, and trades,
Degrees, observances, customs, and laws,
Decline to your confounding contraries,
And let confusion live.”

After this the speaker degenerates into the formless expression of blind rage, invoking leprosy upon the general population of Athens, and mere sciatica upon the Senate. Flavius, the steward, in discharging the servants and paying them out of his own pocket, is not without greatness of soul, and there is a gloomy power in some of his reflections, as, for instance :—

“ O, the fierce wretchedness that glory brings us !
Who would not wish to be from wealth exempt,
Since riches point to misery and contempt ? ”

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There is nothing, said the Marquess of Halifax, upon which men spend more money than upon making themselves ridiculous. Timon in his loneliness and poverty is not so much an object of ridicule as Timon among his flatterers and parasites. But he cannot escape from "yellow, glittering, precious gold." While he digs for roots, the favourite food of Apemantus, he finds the root of all evil, that which makes the "learned pate" "duck to the golden fool." To him at his task comes Alcibiades marching on Athens, and accompanied by two courtesans, exceptionally degraded specimens of their class, who never open their mouths except to curse or to beg. But in cursing they cannot contend with Timon, whose coarseness in this scene is like the coarseness of Swift, not prurient and not ribald, but delighting in whatever degrades mankind. Such misanthropy as Swift's, at its worst, and Timon's, in this scene, is unfit for literature or for the stage. It is a sight to shudder at, not to see. When Timon gives Alcibiades money to help him in destroying Athens, when Phrynia and Timandra beg Timon for more money as he rains abuse upon their heads, we feel misanthropy as Balaustion felt obscenity, "grotesqued so much, it slinks away revolted at itself." After the departure of Alcibiades and his retinue Timon is visited by Apemantus, and the dialogue between the two is most curious. Apemantus has always hankered after Timon, and as if to show that pure misanthropy is impossible for a sane man, he approaches him now in quest of something very like sympathy. "Do not assume my likeness," he says with disinterested candour :—

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“Be thou a flatterer now, and seek to thrive
By that which has undone thee.”

But Timon, so far from being drawn to his brother misanthrope, abhors him utterly, and when Apemantus thinks to ingratiate himself with the outcast whom he “loves better now than e’er he did,” by saying that he sought him out to vex him, Timon replies, with much method in his madness:—

“Always a villain’s office or a fool’s.”

In the fine speech where he describes himself as “left open, bare for every storm that blows,” the misanthrope made by circumstance asserts his superiority over the misanthrope by nature.

“Why shouldst thou hate men?

They never flattered thee,”

is a cry of anguish as well as an expression of disgust.

“I, to bear this,

That never knew but better, is some burden,”

has a human ring which once more makes Timon bearable. As for Apemantus, he is a degree lower than the melancholy Jaques. Jaques had been “a brutish libertine.” Apemantus would have been one if he had had the chance. The conversation of Apemantus and Timon, though it ends in the mere calling of names, has in it more stuff than any other part of the play. There is daring in the address to the thieves who have come for Timon’s new gold, and find themselves almost flouted out of their calling by the extravagance of his cynicism.

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There is pathos in Timon's final dismissal of Flavius, the just steward, to whom he gives money on condition that he will "build from men," that is, live in solitude. But neither episode will compare with the scene between Timon and Apemantus, to which I shall return.

There is not much trace of Shakespeare in the fifth act of "Timon," which drags its slow length across the stage. The report of Timon's new treasure, spread through Athens by Alcibiades and his female companions, brings him, as Apemantus predicted that it would, a fresh troop of visitors. First we have the poet and the painter, who are beaten and driven out with reproaches, neither exaggerated nor undeserved. Then comes a Deputation from the Senate, asking him to take the field against Alcibiades. The poet and the painter were at least logical, for if Timon had gold, he might give some to them. But how it would enable him to

". . . drive back
Of Alcibiades the approaches wild"

the Senators wisely make no effort to explain. All they get from Timon is a torrent of contumelious language, in which their supplications are drowned. The absurdities of the situation are manifest. How did the Senators, or Flavius who accompanies them, get out of Athens while Alcibiades was besieging it? How could Alcibiades have spread the report of the treasure without entering the city? Other like questions might be put. But we forget them all before the last speech of Timon, pure Shakespeare in its opening lines, though Wilkins or any

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one else may have added the final tag. "Come not," he says:—

"Come not to me again: but say to Athens,
Timon hath made his everlasting mansion
Upon the beached verge of the salt flood;
Whom once a day with his embossed froth
The turbulent surge shall cover."

So we might well leave him. But it seems that before his death he wrote his epitaph, discovered by a soldier, and deciphered by Alcibiades. It is quite unworthy of Shakespeare, and cannot possibly be his. The dialogue between Alcibiades and the soldiers on the walls is still worse. It is held after Timon's death, and its sole connection with the play is that from the general amnesty which he grants to the city Alcibiades excepts the enemies, meaning the friends, of Timon as well as his own. The reconciliation of Alcibiades and the Athenian people with which the play concludes has nothing to do with the subject. Alcibiades, whatever else he may have been, was no misanthrope.

Signs of carelessness, either in construction or in style, are no disproof of Shakespeare's authorship. Shakespeare could be as careless and as bounteous as nature herself. He cared no more for consistency than he cared for the historical character of Cardinal Beaufort, or for the geographical position of Bohemia. A robust and acute critic has gone so far as to say that "Hamlet" was the one play upon which he expended minute and careful pains. It is not the roughness and crudity of "Timon," but the flat, prosaic dulness in which it abounds, that,

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apart altogether from external evidence, forbids us to regard it as the work of the master. Its hard, repellent ugliness is not equalled in any other piece attributed to Shakespeare except “*Titus Andronicus*,” which almost all Shakespearean scholars now discard. The ostentatious cynicism of “*Troilus and Cressida*” is attractive in comparison with the taunts of Apemantus and the ravings of Timon. “*Timon of Athens*,” according to Mr. Lee’s authoritative chronology, was composed within a few months of “*King Lear*.” Is it possible to believe that they are from the same mint? Lear himself is sometimes rough and coarse. He was the barbarous chieftain of a barbarous age, whereas Timon was the citizen of a community as refined and civilised as the England of Elizabeth. After the second act, with a short interval between his meeting Cordelia and her death, Lear is mad. Timon, though he loses his temper, never loses his wits. Yet Lear excites pity and terror, Timon contempt and disgust. Contrast Lear in the storm on the heath with Timon digging in front of his cave :—

“*Lear*. Rumble thy bellyful ! Spit, fire ! spout, rain !
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters :
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness ;
I never gave you kingdom, call’d you children,
You owe me no subscription : then let fall
Your horrible pleasure ; here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man.”

“*Timon*. Let me look back upon thee, O thou wall,
That girdlest in those wolves, dive in the earth,

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And fence not Athens. Matrons turn incontinent ;
Obedience fail in children. Slaves and fools
Pluck the grave wrinkled senate from the bench,
And minister in their steads. To general filths
Convert o' the instant, green virginity,
Do 't in your parents' eyes."

This specimen of Timon's vituperation is rather favourable than otherwise, while there are even finer passages in "Lear" than the magnificent lines quoted above. If both were written by the same man at the same time, we can only say of Shakespeare, as Horace says of Homer, that he sometimes nods.

Taking, however, the tragedy of "Timon" as we find it, and recognising the admitted fact that Shakespeare had some part in it, great or small, we naturally ask the question what there was in a familiar story that aroused his interest, what aspect of human nature it presented to his eyes. From this forbidding drama the influence of the fairer and softer sex is ruthlessly shut out. In the older play Timon's approaching marriage is prevented by his ruin. Both the girl's father and the girl herself refuse to take him without his money. There is not even this miserable semblance of love in Shakespeare's "Timon," as for the sake of brevity one may call it. There are no women at all, except a few dancing girls to enliven the first banquet, and two shameless harpies in the train of Alcibiades. When we consider that no other man knew women as Shakespeare knew them, that he was the creator of Rosalind, of Beatrice, of Portia, of Imogen, of Cordelia, we may safely infer that he deemed the situation

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unworthy of their presence. For if it be said that a wife or a daughter would have done what Flavius could not do, and checked extravagance before it led to disaster, it may be replied that the loss of a mistress would have added poignancy to the loss of friends. There are two characters in "Timon," and two alone, which are not merely conventional. One, of course, is Timon himself; the other is Apemantus. That Shakespeare took any interest in Alcibiades and the Senate is incredible. Lucius and Lucullus were alike to him. They were no more than Alcibiades's unknown client. The vanity of riches, even if he had strongly felt it, was in itself too trite a theme. What, then, was it that drew the eye of the master to this old tale? I believe it to have been the mutual relations between the outraged sentimentalist Timon and the born cynic Apemantus. Shakespeare never cares how vile is the mouth into which he puts his deepest sayings. The most magnificent lines on death ever written by man are spoken by the weak and cowardly Claudio in "Measure for Measure." "Timon of Athens" contains nothing that approaches such a level as that; but Apemantus has some of Iago's shrewdness. When he is not idly railing, he can speak words of practical wisdom. "What man," he asks Timon, "what man didst thou ever know in thrift that was loved after his means?" To which Timon retorts feebly enough, "Who, without those means thou talkest of, didst thou ever know beloved?" There is point in the remark of Apemantus, there is none in Timon's, because Apemantus sees clearly what he always saw, the baser elements in man, which

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Timon has swung round from an irrational optimism to a pessimism equally devoid of reason. "The middle of humanity," Apemantus tells him with truth, "thou never knewest, but the extremity of both ends." Apemantus can talk sense. The lowest of mankind can do that, in life, as in Shakespeare; and Apemantus is no sensualist. Even when meat and wine are set before him, he prefers roots and water. He is low because he cannot admire, because the quality of his eye is to see evil and not good. He thought that Timon had become such an one as himself, and could rejoice in his company. The statement that he had come to vex him was a lie. The greeting he received was the reverse of that which he expected. Timon hates Apemantus even more than he hates the rest of mankind because Apemantus makes misanthropy seem odious and contemptible. "One that hath had losses," as Dogberry says, he cannot away with a railer on mankind who never had anything to lose. He has given Apemantus a good conceit of himself. There is a smug complacency, quite unlike his usual style of address, in the couplet with which he opens :—

"I was directed hither : men report
Thou dost affect my manners, and dost use them."

This is the last drop in Timon's cup. It does not, as it might have done, produce a reaction by disgust; but it makes him curse Apemantus with a particular heartiness, as though the latter occupied some black depth of iniquity below the abyss of human wickedness in

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which all the world is plunged. From his misery he cries :—

“ Were I like thee, I ’d throw away myself.”

The whole of this extraordinary scene is undoubtedly Shakespeare’s, and the speech of Apemantus from

“ This is in thee a nature but infected ”

to

“ Do not assume my likeness ”

is thoroughly Shakespearean. The verse is smooth, as it seldom is in this play, and yet every line is packed with meaning. Timon, says Apemantus, is a mere imitator ; he himself is the genuine cynic. This comparison is, as we have seen, more than Timon can bear, and in depicting the effect of Apemantus upon him Shakespeare displays all his art. But while “ Timon of Athens ” is something more than a practical sermon upon the hollowness of wealth, it is nothing less. If Timon had been a poor man, he would have been a happy one, and he knows it. “ Here is no use for gold,” says Apemantus. “ The best and truest,” replies Timon.

“ For here it sleeps, and does no hired harm.”

Aurum irrepertum sic melius situm, said Horace. The gold best situated is gold undiscovered. Horace was an Epicurean and a man of the world, knowing well by experience all that gold could do ; and that was his deliberate judgment. Timon, Shakespeare’s Timon, is of the same mind. He neither hoarded his gold nor spent it

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on himself. He lavished it upon his neighbours, and it brought neither gratitude nor respect. Nor, open-handed as he was, was he altogether reckless in his liberality. His provision for the marriage portion of Lucilius is thoughtful and considerate, as well as generous. What he gave he gave graciously, and like a gentleman, seeking to spare the recipient all the irksomeness of obligation. If money could buy "that which should accompany old age, as honour, love, obedience, troops of friends," Timon would have bought them all. But when they found that there was nothing more to be got out of him, his friends, or his parasites, forsook him and fled. Shakespeare assuredly did not mean to imply that Timon's friends were exceptionally depraved. The faithful steward is the exception; they are the rule. Shakespeare was no pessimist, no cynic, no misanthrope, no disbeliever in true friendship; but he did not think that friendship, or respect, or anything beyond material comforts, could be bought. The great and gloomy satirist of Rome said that there was no greater hardship in poverty than the ridicule it excited. The greater and deeper philosopher whose share in "Timon of Athens" is its sole interest now never holds up poverty to contempt. Neither Timon nor his trencher-fed pack of friends were poor until they had ruined him, and then it is not his poverty that drives him frantic, but the exposure of his vulgar ideal. Vulgarity was the source of his delusions and the cause of his fall; not the superficial vulgarity of outward behaviour, but the essential vulgarity which misapprehends the real value of things. In Athens, not long before

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the days of Timon, there was a teacher so poor that, though he taught as no man had ever taught before him, he could hardly have given one of his disciples a dinner. But when he was in danger of an unjust doom he did not fear; most of his friends would willingly have died for him, and all remained with him to the end. Shakespeare knew what true friendship was. It is the feeling of Horatio for Hamlet, of Bassanio for Antonio, of Kent for Lear. But it cannot be bought with all the gold of Ophir. If a man should give the whole substance of his house for it, he would utterly be contemned.

HERBERT PAUL.

TIMON OF ATHENS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ¹

TIMON, a noble Athenian.

LUCIUS,
LUCULLUS, } flattering lords.
SEMPRONIUS, }

VENTIDIUS, one of Timon's false friends.

ALCIBIADES, an Athenian captain.

APEMANTUS, a churlish philosopher.

FLAVIUS, steward to Timon.

Poet, Painter, Jeweller, and Merchant.

An old Athenian.

FLAMINIUS,
LUCILIUS, } servants to Timon.
SERVILIUS, }

CAPHIS,
PHILOTUS, } servants to Timon's creditors and to the Lords.
TITUS,
HORTENSIVS,
And others, }

A Page. A Fool. Three Strangers.

PHRYNIA,
TIMANDRA, } mistresses to Alcibiades.

Cupid and Amazons in the mask.

Other Lords, Senators, Officers, Banditti, and Attendants.

SCENE: *Athens, and the neighbouring woods*

¹ This piece was first printed in the First Folio. The opening Scene is headed "*Actus Primus, Scæna Prima.*" No other scenic division is indicated. The First Folio prints at the end of the piece a somewhat imperfect list of "The Actors Names" (*i. e.*, the *Dramatis Personæ*). Rowe first supplied scenic divisions and a full list of characters.

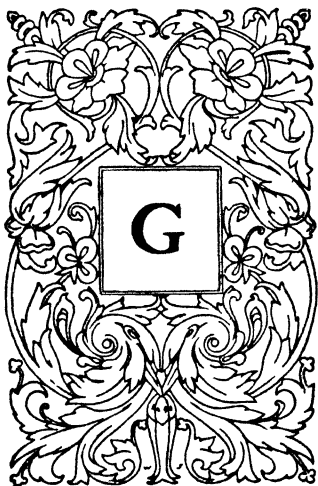


ACT FIRST — SCENE I — ATHENS

A HALL IN TIMON'S HOUSE

*Enter Poet, Painter, Jeweller, Merchant, and others, at
several doors*

POET



GOOD DAY, SIR.

PAIN. I am glad you're well.

POET. I have not seen you long: how goes the world?

PAIN. It wears, sir, as it grows.

POET. Ay, that's well known:
But what particular rarity?
what strange,
Which manifold record not
matches? See,
Magic of bounty! ah these
spirits thy power
Hath conjured to attend. I
know the merchant.

PAIN. I know them both; the other's a jeweller.

MER. O, 'tis a worthy lord!

JEW.

Nay, that's most fix'd.

MER. A most incomparable man, breathed, as it were, 10
To an untirable and continue goodnes:
He passes.

JEW. I have a jewel here —

MER. O, pray, let's see't: for the Lord Timon, sir?

JEW. If he will touch the estimate: but, for that —

POET. [*Reciting to himself*] "When we for recompense
have praised the vile,

It stains the glory in that happy verse
Which aptly sings the good."

MER. [*Looking on the jewel*] 'T is a good form.

JEW. And rich: here is a water, look ye. 20

PAIN. You are rapt, sir, in some work, some dedi-
cation

To the great lord.

POET. A thing slipp'd idly from me.

Our poesy is as a gum, which oozes
From whence 't is nourish'd: the fire i' the flint
Shows not till it be struck; our gentle flame
Provokes itself, and, like the current, flies
Each bound it chafes. What have you there?

10 *breathed*] inured, trained. "Breathed" is the epithet often applied
to a well-trained horse, who is in good wind.

11 *continue*] constant, incapable of interruption.

12 *passes*] surpasses (all experience).

15 *touch the estimate*] come up to or reach the price.

20 *a water*] a fine lustre (of the jewel).

23 *gum, which oozes*] Johnson's correction of the Folio reading *gowne*,
which uses.

27 *chafes*] Theobald's correction of the old reading *chases*. Cf. *Jul. Cæs.*,
I, ii, 101: "Tiber *chafing* with her shores," and *Lear*, IV, vi, 20-21:
"the murmuring surge That on th' unnumber'd idle pebbles *chafes*."

PAIN. A picture, sir. When comes your book forth?

POET. Upon the heels of my presentment, sir.

Let's see your piece.

30

PAIN. 'T is a good piece.

POET. So 't is: this comes off well and excellent.

PAIN. Indifferent.

POET. Admirable: how this grace

Speaks his own standing! what a mental power

This eye shoots forth! how big imagination

Moves in this lip! to the dumbness of the gesture

One might interpret.

The passage seems to mean that the poet's vein, flowing swiftly like the current of a stream, scorns to be obstructed by the banks which it chafes while hurrying past them.

29 *Upon the heels of my presentment*] As soon as the book has been presented to its patron.

32 *comes off well and excellent*] is a complete success. "Come off," like "turn out," is still colloquially used thus.

33 *Indifferent*] Tolerable: neither good nor bad.

33-34 *how this grace Speaks his own standing*] how the artistic grace of this portrait does full justice to the pose of the original. A "speaking" portrait of Timon, one which paints him to the life, is the subject of the criticism. Cf. *Cymb.*, II, iv, 82-83: "never saw I figures So likely to report themselves."

36-37 *to the dumbness . . . interpret*] in such lifelike gesture, though necessarily speechless, one could easily read words. "Interpret" appears to have the technical significance of "serve the office of interpreter," "interpreter" being the technical title of the person employed to speak for the puppets in the puppet shows of the day. Cf. *Two Gent.*, II, i, 85-86: "O excellent motion [*i. e.*, puppet show]! O exceeding puppet! now will he *interpret* to her," and *Hamlet*, III, ii, 240-241: "I could *interpret* between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying."

PAIN. It is a pretty mocking of the life.
Here is a touch; is't good?

POET. I will say of it,
It tutors nature: artificial strife
Lives in these touches, livelier than life.

40

Enter certain Senators, and pass over

PAIN. How this lord is follow'd!

POET. The senators of Athens: happy man!

PAIN. Look, moe!

POET. You see this confluence, this great flood of
visitors.

I have, in this rough work, shaped out a man,
Whom this beneath world doth embrace and hug
With amplest entertainment: my free drift

40-41 *artificial strife . . . touches*] this contest between art and nature
(the execution of the pencil emulating nature) gives life to these
touches. Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 289-292:

“Look, when a painter would surpass the life,
In limning out a well-proportion'd steed,
His art with nature's workmanship at strife,
As if the dead the living should exceed;”

43 *man*] Theobald's emendation of the Folio reading *men*.

44 *moe*] more, which form of the word Rowe substituted for the archaic
moe of the Folio.

47 *this beneath world*] this lower world. Cf. *Lear*, II, ii, 158: “this under
globe,” and *Meas. for Meas.*, IV, iii, 85: “this under generation.”

48-53 *my free drift . . . tract behind*] The general meaning of the passage
is that the poet's wide, unrestrained aim or outlook does not pause to
scrutinise any individual person but moves in an expansive sea of
observation; no malice which is aimed at any particular man taints one
comma of his discourse: his poem flies like the eagle boldly and on a

Halts not particularly, but moves itself
 In a wide sea of wax: no levell'd malice 50
 Infects one comma in the course I hold;
 But flies an eagle flight, bold and forth on,
 Leaving no tract behind.

PAIN. How shall I understand you?

POET. I will unbolt to you.

You see how all conditions, how all minds,
 As well of glib and slippery creatures as
 Of grave and austere quality, tender down
 Their services to Lord Timon: his large fortune,
 Upon his good and gracious nature hanging,
 Subdues and properties to his love and tendance 60
 All sorts of hearts; yea, from the glass-faced flatterer

straight course, leaving no trace of mischief or envy behind it. In other words, the poet aims at emphasising Timon's supreme virtue by dint of an universal generalisation of human life, rather than by individual characterisation, or censure of other individuals. Jacques, in *As you like it*, II, vii, 70, *seq.*, with a cognate subtlety, deprecates censure of individuals, when the general vices of human nature are under discussion. The grammatical construction is irregular and somewhat elliptical. "Sea of wax" has been interpreted as a mass of waxen writing tablets, which were familiar in Rome, and in medieval monasteries, so that it might be equivalent to a "sea of ink." It seems more probable that "wax" merely means here "expanding growth"; Falstaff puns on the word "wax" in the sense of growth in *2 Hen. IV*, I, ii, 150: "If I did say of *wax*, my *growth* would approve the truth."

54 *unbolt*] unfold, explain.

56 *glib and slippery*] smooth-tongued and fickle.

60 *properties*] appropriates.

61 *the glass-faced flatterer*] the sycophant who mirrors every changing expression of his patron.

To Apemantus, that few things loves better
 Than to abhor himself: even he drops down
 The knee before him, and returns in peace
 Most rich in Timon's nod.

PAIN.

I saw them speak together.

POET. Sir, I have upon a high and pleasant hill
 Feign'd Fortune to be throned: the base o' the mount
 Is rank'd with all deserts, all kind of natures,
 That labour on the bosom of this sphere
 To propagate their states: amongst them all, 70
 Whose eyes are on this sovereign lady fix'd,
 One do I personate of Lord Timon's frame,
 Whom Fortune with her ivory hand wafts to her;
 Whose present grace to present slaves and servants
 Translates his rivals.

PAIN.

'T is conceived to scope.
 This throne, this Fortune, and this hill, methinks,
 With one man beckon'd from the rest below,
 Bowing his head against the steepy mount
 To climb his happiness, would be well express'd
 In our condition.

62-64 *Apemantus . . . before him*] The poet mistakes the attitude of Apemantus to Timon; that cynic never shows himself a flatterer of Timon.

68 *Is rank'd . . . deserts*] Is packed with men of all degrees of merit.

70 *To propagate their states*] To further their estates or improve their fortunes.

74-75 *Whose present grace . . . rivals*] [Fortune] whose present generosity (to Timon) turns those who were his equals into his slaves and servants for the time being.

75 *'T is conceived to scope*] 'T is a conception to the purpose.

79-80 *would be well . . . condition*] would offer suitable interpretation of, or fit comment on, the general state of our affairs.

POET. Nay, sir, but hear me on.
 All those which were his fellows but of late,
 Some better than his value, on the moment
 Follow his strides, his lobbies fill with tendance,
 Rain sacrificial whisperings in his ear,
 Make sacred even his stirrup, and through him
 Drink the free air.

80

PAIN. Ay, marry, what of these?

POET. When Fortune in her shift and change of
 mood

Spurns down her late beloved, all his dependants
 Which labour'd after him to the mountain's top
 Even on their knees and hands, let him slip down,
 Not one accompanying his declining foot.

90

PAIN. 'T is common:

A thousand moral paintings I can show,
 That shall demonstrate these quick blows of Fortune's
 More pregnantly than words. Yet you do well
 To show Lord Timon that mean eyes have seen
 The foot above the head.

83 *with tendance*] with attendance, with waiting on him.

84 *Rain . . . ear*] Pour whisperings as if to a god to whom they are making sacrificial offerings.

85-86 *through him Drink the free air*] They inhale air which is free to all, as if it were his gift to them.

90 *slip*] Rowe's emendation of the Folio reading *sit*.

95 *pregnantly*] aptly.

96-97 *mean eyes . . . head*] men of mean and ordinary capacity have noticed Fortune's tendency to reverse her favourites' luck, to turn them upside down.

Trumpets sound. Enter LORD TIMON, addressing himself courteously to every suitor; a Messenger from VENTIDIUS talking with him; LUCILIUS and other servants following

TIM. Imprison'd is he, say you?

MESS. Ay, my good lord: five talents is his debt;
His means most short, his creditors most strait:
Your honourable letter he desires 100
To those have shut him up; which failing,
Periods his comfort.

TIM. Noble Ventidius! Well,
I am not of that feather to shake off
My friend when he must need me. I do know him
A gentleman that well deserves a help:
Which he shall have: I'll pay the debt and free him.

MESS. Your lordship ever binds him.

TIM. Commend me to him: I will send his ransom;
And, being enfranchised, bid him come to me:
'Tis not enough to help the feeble up, 110
But to support him after. Fare you well.

MESS. All happiness to your honour! [Exit.

Enter an old Athenian

OLD ATH. Lord Timon, hear me speak.

98 *talents*] Among the Greeks the "talent" was a weight of money equivalent to 6000 drachmae or some £200 sterling (or 1000 dollars); "five talents" would be worth more than £1000 or 5000 dollars. Elsewhere (cf. III, i, 19, *infra*) Shakespeare loosely makes a talent the equivalent of an English pound.

101-102 *which failing . . . comfort*] failure of which puts a period or end to his comfort.

104 *he must need me*] he cannot but want my assistance.

TIM. Freely, good father.

OLD ATH. Thou hast a servant named Lucilius.

TIM. I have so: what of him?

OLD ATH. Most noble Timon, call the man before thee.

TIM. Attends he here, or no? Lucilius!

LUC. Here, at your lordship's service.

OLD ATH. This fellow here, Lord Timon, this thy creature,

By night frequents my house. I am a man 120
That from my first have been inclined to thrift,
And my estate deserves an heir more raised
Than one which holds a trencher.

TIM. Well, what further?

OLD ATH. One only daughter have I, no kin else,
On whom I may confer what I have got:
The maid is fair, o' the youngest for a bride,
And I have bred her at my dearest cost
In qualities of the best. This man of thine
Attempts her love: I prithee, noble lord,
Join with me to forbid him her resort; 130
Myself have spoke in vain.

TIM. The man is honest.

OLD ATH. Therefore he will be, Timon:
His honesty rewards him in itself;
It must not bear my daughter.

TIM. Does she love him?

123 *one which holds a trencher*] a serving man who waits at table.

132-134 *Therefore . . . daughter*] Therefore he will continue to be honest; his honesty ought to be its own reward; it should not carry off my daughter in addition.

OLD ATH. She is young and apt:
Our own precedent passions do instruct us
What levity's in youth.

TIM. [*To Lucilius*] Love you the maid?

LUC. Ay, my good lord; and she accepts of it.

OLD ATH. If in her marriage my consent be missing,
I call the gods to witness, I will choose 140
Mine heir from forth the beggars of the world,
And dispossess her all.

TIM. How shall she be endow'd,
If she be mated with an equal husband?

OLD ATH. Three talents on the present; in future, all.

TIM. This gentleman of mine hath served me long:
To build his fortune I will strain a little,
For 't is a bond in men. Give him thy daughter:
What you bestow, in him I'll counterpoise,
And make him weigh with her.

OLD ATH. Most noble lord,
Pawn me to this your honour, she is his. 150

TIM. My hand to thee; mine honour on my promise.

LUC. Humbly I thank your lordship: never may
That state or fortune fall into my keeping,
Which is not owed to you!

[*Exeunt Lucilius and old Athenian.*]

135 *apt*] susceptible.

136 *precedent*] former, earlier.

143 *an equal husband*] a husband of equal fortune.

147 *a bond in men*] a bounden duty of masters to servants.

152-154 *never may . . . owed to you*] whatever may be the position that fortune appoints for me I shall hold it altogether due to you (and wholly at your service).

POET. Vouchsafe my labour, and long live your lordship!

TIM. I thank thee; you shall hear from me anon:
Go not away. What have you there, my friend?

PAIN. A piece of painting, which I do beseech
Your lordship to accept.

TIM. Painting is welcome.
The painting is almost the natural man; 160
For since dishonour traffics with man's nature,
He is but outside: these pencill'd figures are
Even such as they give out. I like your work,
And you shall find I like it: wait attendance
Till you hear further from me.

PAIN. The gods preserve ye!

TIM. Well fare you, gentleman: give me your hand;
We must needs dine together. Sir, your jewel
Hath suffer'd under praise.

JEW. What, my lord! dispraise?

TIM. A mere satiety of commendations.
If I should pay you for 't as 't is extoll'd, 170
It would unclew me quite.

JEW. My lord, 't is rated

162-163 *He is but outside . . . give out*] He is but an empty semblance (a whited sepulchre); pictures have no hypocrisy; they are just what they profess to be.

167-168 *Sir, your jewel . . . dispraise*] Your jewel has suffered owing to the high praise bestowed on it. The jeweller misunderstands Timon's words "under praise," and wrongly interprets them "dispraise," i. e., depreciation.

171 *unclew*] undo; the figure is from unwinding a ball of yarn thread.

As those which sell would give: but you well know,
Things of like value, differing in the owners,
Are prized by their masters: believe 't, dear lord,
You mend the jewel by the wearing it.

TIM. Well mock'd.

MER. No, my good lord; he speaks the common
tongue,

Which all men speak with him.

TIM. Look, 'who comes here: will you be chid?

Enter APEMANTUS

JEW. We'll bear, with your lordship.

MER.

He'll spare none.

TIM. Good morrow to thee, gentle Apemantus! 181

APEM. Till I be gentle, stay thou for thy good
morrow;

When thou art Timon's dog, and these knaves honest.

TIM. Why dost thou call them knaves? thou know'st
them not.

APEM. Are they not Athenians?

TIM. Yes.

APEM. Then I repent not.

JEW. You know me, Apemantus?

174 *Are prized by their masters*] Are appraised according to the esteem in which their masters or owners are held.

175 *You mend the jewel . . . it*] Cf. I, ii, 166, *infra*: "to advance this jewel," and note.

182-183 *Till I be . . . honest*] Apemantus will not return Timon's "Good morrow" till he becomes gentle, which will only be when Timon is transformed into the shape of his dog, and his knavish followers become men of honesty (all which will never be).

APEM. Thou know'st I do; I call'd thee by thy name.

TIM. Thou art proud, Apemantus.

190

APEM. Of nothing so much as that I am not like

Timon.

TIM. Whither art going?

APEM. To knock out an honest Athenian's brains.

TIM. That's a deed thou'lt die for.

APEM. Right, if doing nothing be death by the law.

TIM. How likest thou this picture, Apemantus?

APEM. The best, for the innocence.

TIM. Wrought he not well that painted it?

APEM. He wrought better that made the painter;
and yet he's but a filthy piece of work.

201

PAIN. You're a dog.

APEM. Thy mother's of my generation: what's
she, if I be a dog?

TIM. Wilt dine with me, Apemantus?

APEM. No; I eat not lords.

TIM. An thou shouldst, thou'ldst anger ladies.

APEM. O, they eat lords; so they come by great bellies.

TIM. That's a lascivious apprehension.

210

APEM. So thou apprehend'st it: take it for thy labour.

TIM. How dost thou like this jewel, Apemantus?

APEM. Not so well as plain-dealing, which will not
cost a man a doit.

TIM. What dost thou think 't is worth?

198 *The best, for the innocence*] An ironical phrase; "innocence" is often used for stupidity or imbecility. Apemantus credits Timon's portrait with a namby-pamby expression.

213-214 *Not so well . . . a doit*] An allusion to the proverb, "Plain dealing is a jewel, but those that use it die beggars."

APEM. Not worth my thinking. How now, poet!

POET. How now, philosopher!

APEM. Thou liest.

POET. Art not one?

APEM. Yes.

220

POET. Then I lie not.

APEM. Art not a poet?

POET. Yes.

APEM. Then thou liest: look in thy last work, where thou hast feigned him a worthy fellow.

POET. That's not feigned; he is so.

APEM. Yes, he is worthy of thee, and to pay thee for thy labour: he that loves to be flattered is worthy o' the flatterer. Heavens, that I were a lord!

TIM. What wouldst do then, Apemantus?

230

APEM. E'en as Apemantus does now; hate a lord with my heart.

TIM. What, thyself?

APEM. Ay.

TIM. Wherefore?

APEM. That I had no angry wit to be a lord. Art not thou a merchant?

MER. Ay, Apemantus.

APEM. Traffic confound thee, if the gods will not!

236 *That I had no angry wit to be a lord*] Thus the old editions. The expression is difficult. The passage may mean that he lacks that petulant wit, which befits a lord, who is often credited with a haughty impatience of speech. But "to be a lord" may have the privative force of "to prevent me from becoming a lord," in which case Johnson may be right in explaining the whole passage: "I should hate myself for tamely enduring to be a lord."

MER. If traffic do it, the gods do it. 240

APEM. Traffic's thy god; and thy god confound thee!

Trumpet sounds. Enter a Messenger

TIM. What trumpet's that?

MESS. 'T is Alcibiades, and some twenty horse,
All of companionship.

TIM. Pray, entertain them; give them guide to us.
[Exeunt some Attendants.]

You must needs dine with me: go not you hence
Till I have thank'd you: when dinner's done,
Show me this piece. I am joyful of your sights.

Enter ALCIBIADES, with the rest

Most welcome, sir!

APEM. So, so, there!

Aches contract and starve your supple joints! 250
That there should be small love 'mongst these sweet
knaves,

And all this courtesy! The strain of man's bred out
Into baboon and monkey.

ALCIB. Sir, you have saved my longing, and I feed
Most hungerly on your sight.

TIM. Right welcome, sir!

244 *All of companionship*] All of the same social rank.

248 *I am joyful of your sights*] I am glad you should see it.

250 *Aches*] A dissyllable. The word was pronounced "aitches." Cf. V, i, 197, *infra*: "Their fears of hostile strokes, their *aches*, losses."

starve . . . joints] destroy the suppleness of your joints, and so stiffen them as in rheumatic affections.

Ere we depart, we'll share a bounteous time
In different pleasures. Pray you, let us in.

[Exeunt all but Apemantus.]

Enter two Lords

FIRST LORD. What time o' day is 't, Apemantus?

APEM. Time to be honest.

FIRST LORD. That time serves still. 260

APEM. The most accursed thou, that still omitt'st it.

SEC. LORD. Thou art going to Lord Timon's feast?

APEM. Ay, to see meat fill knaves and wine heat
fools.

SEC. LORD. Fare thee well, fare thee well.

APEM. Thou art a fool to bid me farewell twice.

SEC. LORD. Why, Apemantus?

APEM. Shouldst have kept one to thyself, for I mean
to give thee none.

FIRST LORD. Hang thyself!

APEM. No, I will do nothing at thy bidding: make
thy requests to thy friend. 271

SEC. LORD. Away, unpeaceable dog, or I'll spurn
thee hence!

APEM. I will fly, like a dog, the heels o' the ass. *[Exit.]*

FIRST LORD. He's opposite to humanity. Come,
shall we in,

And taste Lord Timon's bounty? he outgoes
The very heart of kindness.

SEC. LORD. He pours it out; Plutus, the god of gold,

256 *depart*] part or separate; a common usage.

272 *unpeaceable*] quarrelsome.

276-277 *he outgoes . . . kindness*] he outdoes the very soul of kindness.

Is but his steward: no meed, but he repays
 Sevenfold above itself; no gift to him,
 But breeds the giver a return exceeding
 All use of quittance.

280

FIRST LORD. The noblest mind he carries
 That ever govern'd man.

SEC. LORD. Long may he live in fortunes! Shall
 we in?

FIRST LORD. I'll keep you company. [Exeunt.

SCENE II — A BANQUETING-ROOM IN TIMON'S HOUSE

*Hautboys playing loud music. A great banquet served in;
 FLAVIUS and others attending; and then enter LORD TIMON,
 ALCIBIADES, Lords, Senators, and VENTIDIUS. Then comes,
 dropping after all, APEMANTUS, discontentedly, like himself*

VEN. Most honour'd Timon,
 It hath pleased the gods to remember my father's age,
 And call him to long peace.
 He is gone happy, and has left me rich:
 Then, as in grateful virtue I am bound
 To your free heart, I do return those talents,
 Doubled with thanks and service, from whose help
 I derived liberty.

279 *meed*] desert.

282 *All use of quittance*] All custom of requital, any ordinary mode of
 discharging obligations

6 *free*] liberal, bountiful.

TIM. O, by no means,
 Honest Ventidius; you mistake my love:
 I gave it freely ever; and there's none 10
 Can truly say he gives, if he receives:
 If our betters play at that game, we must not dare
 To imitate them; faults that are rich are fair.

VEN. A noble spirit!

TIM. Nay, my lords, ceremony was but devised at first
 To set a gloss 'on faint deeds, hollow welcomes,
 Recanting goodness, sorry ere 't is shown;
 But where there is true friendship, there needs none.
 Pray, sit; more welcome are ye to my fortunes
 Than my fortunes to me. [*They sit.* 20]

FIRST LORD. My lord, we always have confess'd it.

APEM. Ho, ho, confess'd it! hang'd it, have you not?

TIM. O, Apemantus, you are welcome.

APEM. No;

You shall not make me welcome:

I come to have thee thrust me out of doors.

TIM. Fie, thou'rt a churl; ye've got a humour there
 Does not become a man; 't is much to blame.

They say, my lords, "*ira furor brevis est*;" but yond
 man is ever angry. Go, let him have a table by him-

13 *faults . . . fair*] There is a fair plausibility in the faults of rich people, especially in such as tend to increase their wealth. (But their faults are faults all the same.)

22 *confess'd it! hang'd it*] an allusion to the common colloquial phrase, "Confess and be hanged!"

28 "*ira furor brevis est*"] "Anger is a brief madness"; a Latin proverb, quoted by Horace, *Epistles*, I, ii, 62.

29 *ever angry*] Rowe's emendation of the Folio reading *very angry*.

self; for he does neither affect company, nor is he fit so for 't indeed.

APEM. Let me stay at thine apperil, Timon:
I come to observe; I give thee warning on 't.

TIM. I take no heed of thee; thou'rt an Athenian, therefore welcome: I myself would have no power; prithee, let my meat make thee silent.

APEM. I scorn thy meat; 't would choke me, for I should ne'er flatter thee. O you gods, what a number of men eat Timon, and he sees 'em not! It grieves me to see so many dip their meat in one man's blood; and 40 all the madness is, he cheers them up too.

I wonder men dare trust themselves with men:
Methinks they should invite them without knives;
Good for their meat, and safer for their lives.

There's much example for't; the fellow that sits next him now, parts bread with him, pledges the breath of him in a divided draught, is the readiest man to kill

32 *apperil*] peril.

35 *I myself would have no power*] The laws of hospitality deprive a host of the power of silencing a guest.

37-38 *I scorn thy meat . . . flatter thee*] "Grudged meat" (according to the proverb) chokes the person that eats it. Apemantus means that Timon's meat is only given willingly to those who pay for it in flattery. Since he could not flatter, the meat, being grudged, woul' stick in his throat.

40 *so many dip . . . blood*] An allusion to hounds drinking the blood of the prey they slaughter in the chase.

43 *without knives*] Guests invited to an Elizabethan banquet were expected to bring their own knives. The next line suggests that if they came without knives, they would be more sparing with the food, and the host would stand in less danger of his life.

him: 't has been proved. If I were a huge man, I
 should fear to drink at meals;
 Lest they should spy my windpipe's dangerous notes: 50
 Great men should drink with harness on their throats.

TIM. My lord, in heart; and let the health go round.

SEC. LORD. Let it flow this way, my good lord.

APEM. Flow this way! A brave fellow! he keeps his
 tides well. Those healths will make thee and thy state
 look ill, Timon. Here's that which is too weak to be a
 sinner, honest water, which ne'er left man i' the mire:
 This and my food are equals; there's no odds:
 Feasts are too proud to give thanks to the gods.

Apemantus's Grace

Immortal gods, I crave no pelf; 60
 I pray for no man but myself:
 Grant I may never prove so fond,
 To trust man on his oath or bond,
 Or a harlot for her weeping,
 Or a dog that seems a-sleeping,
 Or a keeper with my freedom,
 Or my friends, if I should need 'em.
 Amen. So fall to't:
 Rich men sin, and I eat root. [*Eats and drinks.*

Much good dich thy good heart, Apemantus! 70

50 *windpipe's dangerous notes*] The gurgling sounds made by the big-wig's
 throat in drinking call the evil-minded man's attention to where the
 windpipe is.

51 *harness*] armour.

52 *in heart*] in all sincerity.

70 *dich*] commonly explained as a corruption of "do it." Cf. *Merry Wives*,
 I, i, 73: "Much good *do it* your good heart."

TIM. Captain Alcibiades, your heart's in the field now.

ALCIB. My heart is ever at your service, my lord.

TIM. You had rather be at a breakfast of enemies than a dinner of friends.

ALCIB. So they were bleeding-new, my lord, there's no meat like 'em: I could wish my best friend at such a feast.

APEM. Would all those flatterers were thine enemies, then, that then thou mightst kill 'em and bid me to 'em!

FIRST LORD. Might we but have that happiness, my lord, that you would once use our hearts, whereby we might express some part of our zeals, we should think ourselves for ever perfect.

TIM. O, no doubt, my good friends, but the gods themselves have provided that I shall have much help from you: how had you been my friends else? why have you that charitable title from thousands, did not you chiefly belong to my heart? I have told more of you to myself than you can with modesty speak in your own behalf; and thus far I confirm you. O you gods, think I, what need we have any friends, if we should ne'er have need of 'em? they were the most needless creatures living, should we ne'er have use for 'em, and would most resemble sweet instruments hung up in cases, that keep their sounds to themselves. Why, I have often

83 *perfect*] perfect in happiness, completely happy. Cf. *Macb.*, III, iv, 21: "I had else been *perfect*."

86-88 *why have you . . . my heart?*] why are you distinguished from thousands, from the multitude of men, by holding that title of friend, if it were not that you are bound to me heart and soul?

90 *thus far I confirm you*] to that extent I am confirmed in my opinion of you.

wished myself poorer, that I might come nearer to you. We are born to do benefits: and what better or properer can we call our own than the riches of our friends? O, what a precious comfort 't is, to have so many, like brothers, commanding one another's fortunes! O joy, e'en made away ere't can be born! Mine eyes cannot hold out water, methinks: to forget their faults, I drink to you.

103

APEM. Thou weep'st to make them drink, Timon.

SEC. LORD. Joy had the like conception in our eyes, And at that instant like a babe sprung up.

APEM. Ho, ho! I laugh to think that babe a bastard.

THIRD LORD. I promise you, my lord, you moved me much.

APEM. Much!

[*Tucket, within.*]

TIM. What means that trump?

Enter a Servant

How now!

110

SERV. Please you, my lord, there are certain ladies most desirous of admittance.

100-102 *O joy . . . water, methinks*] Tears are involuntarily filling Timon's eyes, and thereby destroying joy before it comes to full fruition. His eyes cannot refrain from tears.

102 *their faults*] the tearful weakness of the eyes.

104 *to make them drink*] at making the guests drink.

105-106 *Joy . . . sprung up*] Joy produced the same birth of tears in our eyes, and thereupon joy came to life like a newborn babe. "Like a babe" implies allusion to "baby" in the special sense of the small image of oneself reflected in the pupil of another's eye whence the familiar phrase "to look babies (*i. e.*, to look for babies, to cast amorous glances)." Cf. *Tell-trothe's New Year's Gift* (1593), p. 39, "that *babie* which lodges in women's eies."

TIM. Ladies! what are their wills?

SERV. There comes with them a forerunner, my lord, which bears that office, to signify their pleasures.

TIM. I pray, let them be admitted.

Enter Cupid

CUP. Hail to thee, worthy Timon! and to all
That of his bounties taste! The five best senses
Acknowledge thee their patron, and come freely
To gratulate thy plenteous bosom: th' ear, 120
Taste, touch, and smell, pleased from thy table rise;
They only now come but to feast thine eyes.

TIM. They're welcome all; let 'em have kind admittance:

Music, make their welcome! *[Exit Cupid.]*

FIRST LORD. You see, my lord, how ample you're beloved.

Music. Re-enter Cupid, with a mask of Ladies as Amazons, with lutes in their hands, dancing and playing

APEM. Hoy-day, what a sweep of vanity comes this way!

117 *Hail to thee, worthy Timon!*] It was customary for masquers at a feast in a great house to be introduced by a prologue spoken by a child, personating Cupid. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, I, iv, 4-8: "We'll have no Cupid hoodwink'd with a scarf . . . Nor no without-book prologue, faintly spoke After the prompter, for our entrance." See also *L. L. L.*, V, ii, 158-173.

120 *th' ear*] Theobald's emendation (at the suggestion of Warburton) of the Folio reading *There*. The preceding words of Cupid's speech are printed as prose in the Folios.

ACT I

The Lords rise from table, with much adoring of TIMON; and to show their loves, each singles out an Amazon, and all dance, men with women, a lofty strain or two to the hautboys, and cease

128-129 *Like madness . . . oil and root*] The glory of this life is just as much madness (in the eye of reason) as all this luxury, when compared with a frugal meal of oil and vegetable, is insane waste.

131 *to drink those men*] in order to get drink and entertainment out of those men. Cf. lines 38-39, *supra*: "What a number of men *eat* Timon."

134 *depraves*] indulges in slander.

143 *and lustre*] Thus the First Folio. The Second and later Folios read *and lively lustre*.

And entertain'd me with mine own device:
I am to thank you for 't.

FIRST LADY. My lord, you take us even at the best.

APEM. Faith, for the worst is filthy, and would not
hold taking, I doubt me.

TIM. Ladies, there is an idle banquet attends you:
Please you to dispose yourselves.

150

ALL LAD. Most thankfully, my lord.

[*Exeunt Cupid and Ladies.*]

TIM. Flavius!

FLAV. My lord?

TIM. The little casket bring me hither.

FLAV. Yes, my lord. [*Aside*] More jewels yet!

There is no crossing him in 's humour;

Else I should tell him — well, i' faith, I should —

When all's spent, he 'ld be cross'd then, an he could.

'T is pity bounty had not eyes behind,

That man might ne'er be wretched for his mind. [*Exit.*]

FIRST LORD. Where be our men?

160

146 First Lady. *My lord, . . . best*] “My lord, you form the most favourable impression of us.” The line in the Folios was assigned to *1 Lord*, for which Johnson rightly substituted *1 Lady*.

148 *hold taking*] bear handling. There is a coarse innuendo. Cf. *2 Hen. IV*, IV, i, 161: “A rotten case abides no handling.”

157 *he 'ld be cross'd then*] There is quibbling here. “To be cross'd” sometimes means to be possessed of money or coins (which were stamped with crosses). The speaker means that Timon when all his money is spent would be glad to have money then as well as to have been crossed or thwarted in his prodigality now. Cf. *As you like it*, II, iv, 10: “I should bear *no cross*, if I did bear you.”

158 *'T is pity . . . behind*] sc. whereby she might see the miseries that pursue her.

SERV. Here, my lord, in readiness.

SEC. LORD. Our horses !

Re-enter FLAVIUS, with the casket

TIM. O my friends,
I have one word to say to you : look you, my good lord,
I must entreat you, honour me so much
As to advance this jewel ; accept it and wear it,
Kind my lord,

FIRST LORD. I am so far already in your gifts, —

ALL. So are we all.

Enter a Servant

SERV. My lord, there are certain nobles of the senate
newly alighted and come to visit you. 171

TIM. They are fairly welcome.

FLAV. I beseech your honour, vouchsafe me a word ;
it does concern you near.

TIM. Near ! why, then, another time I 'll hear thee :
I prithee, let 's be provided to show them entertainment.

FLAV. [*Aside*] I scarce know how.

Enter another Servant

SEC. SERV. May it please your honour, Lord Lucius
Out of his free love hath presented to you
Four milk-white horses, trapp'd in silver. 180

TIM. I shall accept them fairly : let the presents
Be worthily entertain'd.

166 *advance*] honour by wearing. Cf. I, i, 175, *supra*: "You mend the
jewel by the wearing it."

181 *the presents*] the horses presented.

Enter a third Servant

How now ! what news ?

THIRD SERV. Please you, my lord, that honourable gentleman, Lord Lucullus, entreats your company to-morrow to hunt with him, and has sent your honour two brace of greyhounds.

TIM. I'll hunt with him; and let them be received,
Not without fair reward.

FLAV. [*Aside*] What will this come to?
He commands us to provide and give great gifts, and all
out of an empty coffer: 190

Nor will he know his purse, or yield me this,

To show him what a beggar his heart is,

Being of no power to make his wishes good:

His promises fly so beyond his state

That what he speaks is all in debt, he owes

For every word: he is so kind that he now

Pays interest for 't; his land 's put to their books.

Well, would I were gently put out of office,

Before I were forced out!

Happier is he that has no friend to feed 200

Than such that do e'en enemies exceed.

I bleed inwardly for my lord. [Exit.]

TIM. You do yourselves

Much wrong, you bate too much of your own merits.

Here, my lord, a trifle of our love.

SEC. LORD. With more than common thanks I will receive it.

194 *his state*] his estate, possessions and property.

THIRD LORD. O, he's the very soul of bounty!

TIM. And now I remember, my lord, you gave good words the other day of a bay courser I rode on. 'Tis yours, because you liked it. 210

THIRD LORD. O, I beseech you, pardon me, my lord, in that.

TIM. You may take my word, my lord; I know, no man can justly praise, but what he does affect: I weigh my friend's affection with mine own: I'll tell you true. I'll call to you.

ALL LORDS. O, none so welcome.

TIM. I take all and your several visitations
So kind to heart, 't is not enough to give:
Methinks, I could deal kingdoms to my friends, 220
And ne'er be weary. Alcibiades,
Thou art a soldier, therefore seldom rich;
It comes in charity to thee: for all thy living
Is 'mongst the dead, and all the lands thou hast
Lie in a pitch'd field.

ALCIB. Ay, defiled land, my lord.

FIRST LORD. We are so virtuously bound —

TIM. And so am I to you.

SEC. LORD. So infinitely endear'd —

TIM. All to you. Lights, more lights! 230

216 *I'll call to you*] I'll summon you to my assistance at need.

220 *deal kingdoms*] deal out or distribute, like playing cards in a card game.

225-226 *a pitch'd field . . . defiled land*] The epithet "pitch'd," which, as applied to "field" means "fit for battle," punningly suggests the succeeding epithet "defiled"; cf. *1 Hen. IV*, II, iv, 401-402: "this *pitch*, as ancient writers do report, doth *defile*."

230 *All to you*] All happiness to you. Cf. *Macb.*, III, iv, 92: "*all to all*."

FIRST LORD. The best of happiness, honour and fortunes, keep with you, Lord Timon!

TIM. Ready for his friends.

[Exeunt all but Apemantus and Timon.]

APEM.

What a coil's here!

Serving of becks and jutting-out of bums!

I doubt whether their legs be worth the sums

That are given for 'em. Friendship's full of dregs:

Methinks, false hearts should never have sound legs.

Thus honest fools lay out their wealth on court'sies.

TIM. Now, Apemantus, if thou wert not sullen,
I would be good to thee.

240

APEM. No, I'll nothing: for if I should be bribed too,
there would be none left to rail upon thee; and then
thou wouldst sin the faster. Thou givest so long, Timon,
I fear me thou wilt give away thyself in paper shortly:
what needs these feasts, pomps and vain-glories?

TIM. Nay, an you begin to rail on society once, I am
sworn not to give regard to you. Farewell; and come
with better music.

[Exit.]

APEM. So: thou wilt not hear me now; thou shalt
not then: I'll lock thy heaven from thee.

250

O, that men's ears should be

To counsel deaf, but not to flattery!

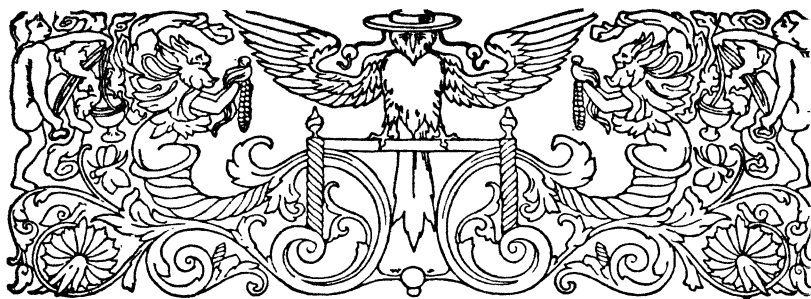
[Exit.]

234 *Serving of becks*] Offering of courtly salutations.

235 *their legs*] their courtly bows.

244 *give away thyself in paper*] be ruined by putting your name to paper bills.

250 *I'll lock thy heaven from thee*] I'll keep from you good counsel, which is your only salvation.

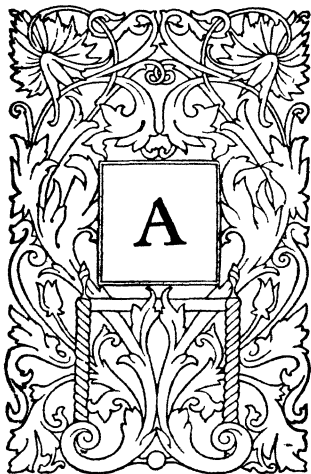


ACT SECOND — SCENE I

" A SENATOR'S HOUSE

Enter a Senator, with papers in his hand

SENATOR



AND LATE FIVE THOUSAND: to Varro and to Isidore
He owes nine thousand; besides
my former sum,
Which makes it five and twenty.
Still in motion
Of raging waste? It cannot
hold; it will not.
If I want gold, steal but a
beggar's dog
And give it Timon, why, the dog
coins gold:
If I would sell my horse and buy
twenty moe

Better than he, why, give my horse to Timon;
Ask nothing, give it him, it foals me straight

9-10 *it foals me . . . horses*] it brings forth foals straight away and able colts too. Thus the First and Second Folios. For *and able horses* Theobald awkwardly read *Ten able horse*.

And able horses: no porter at his gate, 10
 But rather one that smiles and still invites
 All that pass by. It cannot hold; no reason
 Can found his state in safety. Caphis, ho!
 Caphis, I say!

Enter CAPHIS

CAPH. Here, sir; what is your pleasure?

SEN. Get on your cloak, and haste you to Lord
 Timon;

Importune him for my moneys; be not ceased
 With slight denial; nor then silenced, when —
 “Commend me to your master” — and the cap
 Plays in the right hand, thus: but tell him,
 My uses cry to me, I must serve my turn 20
 Out of mine own; his days and times are past,
 And my reliances on his fracted dates
 Have smit my credit: I love and honour him,
 But must not break my back to heal his finger:
 Immediate are my needs; and my relief
 Must not be toss’d and turn’d to me in words,
 But find supply immediate. Get you gone:

12-13 *no reason . . . safety*] reason can detect no safe or secure foundation of his fortune. Hanmer first substituted *found* for the First Folio reading *sound*, which is unintelligible. The First Folio has the same misreading at II, ii, 136, *infra*.

16 *be not ceased*] be not stayed or stopped. “Cease” is frequently found as a transitive verb.

20 *uses*] needs.

22 *on his fracted dates*] on his broken promises to pay by the dates fixed in his bond. Cf. II, ii, 42, *infra*: “date-broke bonds.”

Put on a most importunate aspect,
 A visage of demand; for, I do fear,
 When every feather sticks in his own wing, 30
 Lord Timon will be left a naked gull,
 Which flashes now a phoenix. Get you gone.

CAPH. I go, sir.

SEN. "I go, sir!" Take the bonds along with you,
 And have the dates in compt.

CAPH. I will, sir.

SEN. Go. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II — A HALL IN TIMON'S HOUSE

Enter FLAVIUS, with many bills in his hand

FLAVIUS. No care, no stop! so senseless of expense,
 That he will neither know how to maintain it,

30-32 *When every . . . phoenix*] When every one of his borrowed feathers is transferred to the wing to which it naturally belongs, Timon, who flashes now a phoenix, will be left a bare nestling. "His own" (in line 30) is "its own" and "Which" (in line 32) means "Who." "Gull" was sometimes used for a young bird (cf. *1 Hen. IV*, V, i, 60: "that ungentle gull the cuckoo's bird,") as well as in the sense of "dupe" or "simpleton."

35 *have the dates in compt*] look well at the dates in computing the interest due. Theobald's correction of the Folio reading *have the dates in. Come.*

SCENE II — *A hall in Timon's house*] Thus Rowe indicated the scene for the first time. But at line 91, *infra*, Apemantus tells the fool he will go with him "to Lord Timon's," words which suggest that the scene should take place in a courtyard outside Timon's house, rather than in a hall within it.

Nor cease his flow of riot: takes no account
 How things go from him; nor resumes no care
 Of what is to continue: never mind
 Was to be so unwise, to be so kind.
 What shall be done? he will not hear till feel:
 I must be round with him, now he comes from hunting.
 Fie, fie, fie, fie!

Enter CAPHIS, with the Servants of ISIDORE and VARRO

CAPH. Good even, Varro: what, you come for money? ¹⁰

VAR. SERV. Is 't not your business too?

CAPH. It is: and yours too, Isidore?

ISID. SERV. It is so.

CAPH. Would we were all discharged!

VAR. SERV. I fear it.

CAPH. Here comes the lord.

Enter TIMON, ALCIBIADES, Lords, and others

TIM. So soon as dinner 's done, we'll forth again,
 My Alcibiades. With me? what is your will?

⁴ *resumes*] assumes, takes. Rowe's correction of the Folio reading *resume*.

⁵⁻⁶ *never mind . . . so kind*] no man's mind was ever shown to be so unwise by the doing of acts of kindness.

⁸ *round*] blunt, outspoken.

¹⁰ stage direction) *with the Servants . . . Varro*] Thus Johnson. The Folios read *Isidore and Varro*. In the following lines the servants of these two men are addressed by their masters' names. In the Folio stage directions of Act III, Sc. iv, *infra*, Lucius' servant is similarly introduced in the name of his master, although Varro's servant is there distinguished as "Varros man."

¹⁵ *I fear it*] I doubt it.

CAPH. My lord, here is a note of certain dues.

TIM. Dues! Whence are you?

CAPH. Of Athens here, my lord. 20

TIM. Go to my steward.

CAPH. Please it your lordship, he hath put me off
To the succession of new days this month:
My master is awaked by great occasion
To call upon his own, and humbly prays you
That with your other noble parts you'll suit
In giving him his right.

TIM. Mine honest friend,
I prithee but repair to me next morning.

CAPH. Nay, good my lord, —

TIM. Contain thyself, good friend.

VAR. SERV. One Varro's servant, my good lord, — 30

ISID. SERV. From Isidore; he humbly prays your
speedy payment.

CAPH. If you did know, my lord, my master's wants, —

VAR. SERV. 'T was due on forfeiture, my lord, six
weeks and past.

ISID. SERV. Your steward puts me off, my lord, and I
Am sent expressly to your lordship

TIM. Give me breath.

I do beseech you, good my lords, keep on;

I'll wait upon you instantly. [*Exeunt Alcibiades, Lords, etc.*]

[*To Flav.*] Come hither: pray you, 40

23 *To the succession . . . month*] Till the date of the new moon later
in this month.

26 *That . . . you'll suit*] That you will behave in a manner consistent
with your other noble qualities.

29 *Contain thyself*] Be calm.

How goes the world, that I am thus encounter'd
With clamorous demands of date-broke bonds,
And the detention of long-since-due debts,
Against my honour?

FLAV. Please you, gentlemen,
The time is unagreeable to this business:
Your importunacy cease till after dinner,
That I may make his lordship understand
Wherefore you are not paid.

TIM. Do so, my friends. See them well entertain'd.

[Exit.

FLAV. Pray, draw near.

[Exit. 50

Enter APEMANTUS and Fool

CAPH. Stay, stay, here comes the fool with Apemantus: let's ha' some sport with 'em.

VAR. SERV. Hang him, he'll abuse us.

ISID. SERV. A plague upon him, dog!

VAR. SERV. How dost, fool?

APEM. Dost dialogue with thy shadow?

VAR. SERV. I speak not to thee.

APEM. No, 't is to thyself. [*To the Fool*] Come away.

ISID. SERV. There's the fool hangs on your back already.

42 *date-broke bonds*] Cf. "fracted dates," II, i, 22, *supra*. Steevens' emendation of *debt*, *broken bonds* of the Folios.

55 *How dost, fool?*] The fool is in the service of some well-known courtesan (see line 70, *infra*), and the circumstance gives point to much of the dialogue which follows. The page who enters at line 75, *infra*, belonged to the same questionable household.

APEM. No, thou stand'st single, thou'rt not on him yet. 60

CAPH. Where's the fool now?

APEM. He last asked the question. Poor rogues, and usurers' men! bawds between gold and want!

ALL SERV. What are we, Apemantus?

APEM. Asses.

ALL SERV. Why?

APEM. That you ask me what you are, and do not know yourselves. Speak to 'em, fool.

FOOL. How do you, gentlemen?

ALL SERV. Gramercies, good fool: how does your 70 mistress?

FOOL. She's e'en setting on water to scald such chickens as you are. Would we could see you at Corinth!

APEM. Good! gramercy.

Enter Page

FOOL. Look you, here comes my mistress' page.

PAGE. [*To the Fool*] Why, how now, captain! what do you in this wise company? How dost thou, Apemantus?

APEM. Would I had a rod in my mouth, that I might answer thee profitably.

72-73 *She's e'en setting . . . as you are*] She is preparing to fleece such innocents as you. There is a double allusion to the practice of plunging a freshly killed chicken into saucepans of boiling water before plucking them, and to the sweating tubs which were employed in the cure of venereal diseases.

73 *Corinth*] here used for a brothel. Milton in his *Apology for Smectymnuus* (1847, Works 81-82) calls dwellers in a brothel "young Corinthian laity."

75 *mistress*] Theobald's correction of the Folio *Masters*. Cf. line 103, *infra*, where *Masters* is again read by the Folios for *Mistress*'.

PAGE. Prithee, Apemantus, read me the superscription 80
of these letters: I know not which is which.

APEM. Canst not read?

PAGE. No.

APEM. There will little learning die then, that day
thou art hang'd. This is to Lord Timon; this to Alcibi-
ades. Go; thou wast born a bastard, and thou'lt die a
bawd.

PAGE. Thou wast whelped a dog, and thou shalt
famish a dog's death. Answer not, I am gone. [*Exit.*

APEM. E'en so thou outrun'st grace. Fool, I will go 90
with you to Lord Timon's.

FOOL. Will you leave me there?

APEM. If Timon stay at home. You three serve
three usurers?

ALL SERV. Ay; would they served us!

APEM. So would I, — as good a trick as ever hang-
man served thief.

FOOL. Are you three usurers' men?

ALL SERV. Ay, fool.

99

FOOL. I think no usurer but has a fool to his servant:
my mistress is one, and I am her fool. When men come
to borrow of your masters, they approach sadly and go
away merry; but they enter my mistress' house merrily
and go away sadly: the reason of this?

VAR. SERV. I could render one.

90-91 *I will go . . . Lord Timon's*] See note on the place of SCENE ii,
supra.

103 *mistress*] Theobald's correction of the Folio *Masters*; cf. line 75,
supra.

APEM. Do it then, that we may account thee a whore-master and a knave; which notwithstanding, thou shalt be no less esteemed.

VAR. SERV. What is a whoremaster, fool? 109

FOOL. A fool in good clothes, and something like thee. 'T is a spirit: sometime 't appears like a lord; sometime like a lawyer; sometime like a philosopher, with two stones moe than 's artificial one: he is very often like a knight; and, generally, in all shapes that man goes up and down in from fourscore to thirteen, this spirit walks in.

VAR. SERV. Thou art not altogether a fool.

FOOL. Nor thou altogether a wise man: as much foolery as I have, so much wit thou lack'st.

APEM. That answer might have become Apemantus.

ALL. SERV. Aside, aside; here comes Lord Timon. 120

Re-enter TIMON and FLAVIUS

APEM. Come with me, fool, come.

FOOL. I do not always follow lover, elder brother, and woman; sometime the philosopher.

[Exeunt Apemantus and Fool.]

FLAV. Pray you, walk near: I'll speak with you anon.

[Exeunt Servants.]

TIM. You make me marvel; wherefore, ere this time, Had you not fully laid my state before me, That I might so have rated my expense As I had leave of means?

113 *moe than's artificial one*] The philosopher's stone which might transmute base metals into gold was the great aim of alchemical research.

Cf. *2 Hen. IV*, III, ii, 320.

127 *rated*] calculated or apportioned.

The greatest of your having lacks a half
To pay your present debts.

TIM. Let all my land be sold.

FLAV. 'T is all engaged, some forfeited and gone,
And what remains will hardly stop the mouth
Of present dues: the future comes apace:
What shall defend the interim? and at length 150
How goes our reckoning?

TIM. To Lacedæmon did my land extend.

FLAV. O my good lord, the world is but a word:
Were it all yours to give it in a breath,
How quickly were it gone!

TIM. You tell me true.

FLAV. If you suspect my husbandry or falsehood,
Call me before the exactest auditors,
And set me on the proof. So the gods bless me,
When all our offices have been oppress'd
With riotous feeders, when our vaults have wept 160

145 *having*] wealth, property; so V, i, 16, *infra*.

147 *engaged*] pledged.

150-151 *and at length . . . reckoning?*] and what a wretched plight will result from the final settlement!

153 *a word*] Thus the First Folio, for which the later Folios awkwardly substitute *a world*. Flavius, of course, means that "world" is, after all, a mere word, and can be given away in a breath.

156 *If . . . falsehood*] If you suspect my economic management, or suspect me of dishonesty. The conjectural emendation of *falsehood* for *or falsehood* simplifies the sense.

159-160 *When all . . . feeders*] When all our domestic offices or apartments (*i. e.*, kitchens, stables, and storerooms) have been overwhelmed by riotous parasites. "Feeders," however, is sometimes applied to servants in great houses.

With drunken spilth of wine, when every room
 Hath blazed with lights and bray'd with minstrelsy,
 I have retired me to a wasteful cock,
 And set mine eyes at flow.

TIM. Prithee, no more.

FLAV. Heavens, have I said, the bounty of this lord!
 How many prodigal bits have slaves and peasants
 This night englutted! Who is not Timon's?
 What heart, head, sword, force, means, but is Lord
 Timon's?

Great Timon, noble, worthy, royal Timon!
 Ah, when the means are gone that buy this praise, 170
 The breath is gone whereof this praise is made:
 Feast-won, fast-lost; one cloud of winter showers,
 These flies are couch'd.

TIM. Come, sermon me no further:
 No villanous bounty yet hath pass'd my heart;
 Unwisely, not ignobly, have I given.
 Why dost thou weep? Canst thou the conscience lack,

163 *a wasteful cock*] a bed of waste straw. "Cock" is often found in the sense of a heap of straw or hay (as in *haycock*). These words cannot (as is usually held) mean literally the tap of a wine barrel running to waste. The apparent absurdity of Flavius' choice of such a place of retirement has prompted the emendation *wakeful couch*. But there is no need of change, if the words be rightly interpreted.

172 *Feast-won, fast-lost*] Won by feasting, lost by fasting.

173 *These flies are couch'd*] These creatures of the hour retire to their winter's rest. For "flies" cf. III, vi, 96, *infra*.

174-175 *No villanous bounty . . . given*] No generosity prompted by vice has won my heart's sanction. Want of prudence, not want of virtue, has prompted my bounty.

To think I shall lack friends? Secure thy heart;
 If I would broach the vessels of my love,
 And try the argument of hearts by borrowing,
 Men and men's fortunes could I frankly use 180
 As I can bid thee speak.

FLAV. Assurance bless your thoughts!

TIM. And in some sort these wants of mine are
 crown'd,

That I account them blessings; for by these
 Shall I try friends: you shall perceive how you
 Mistake my fortunes; I am wealthy in my friends.
 Within there! Flaminius! Servilius!

Enter FLAMINIUS, SERVILIUS, and other Servants

SERVANTS. My lord? my lord?

TIM. I will dispatch you severally: you to Lord Lucius: to Lord Lucullus you: I hunted with his honour to-day: you to Sempronius: commend me to their loves; and, I am proud, say, that my occasions have found time to use 'em toward a supply of money: let the request be fifty talents. 193

FLAM. As you have said, my Lord.

177 *Secure thy heart*] Make thy heart easy.

179 *try the argument of hearts*] test what hearts contain. The preliminary statement of the contents of a book was commonly known as "the argument."

182 *are crown'd*] are dignified, are made honourable.

184 *try*] test.

186 *Flaminius*] Rowe's correction of the Folio error *Flavius*.

Stage Direction] *Enter Flaminius . . . servants*] Rowe's expansion of the Folio stage direction *Enter three servants*.

FLAV. [*Aside*] Lord Lucius and Lucullus? hum!

TIM. Go you, sir, to the senators —

Of whom, even to the state's best health, I have
Deserved this hearing — bid 'em send o' the instant
A thousand talents to me.

FLAV. I have been bold,
For that I knew it the most general way, 200
To them to use your signet and your name,
But they do shake their heads, and I am here
No richer in return.

TIM. Is't true? can't be?

FLAV. They answer, in a joint and corporate voice,
That now they are at fall, want treasure, cannot
Do what they would; are sorry — you are honourable, —
But yet they could have wish'd — they know not —
Something hath been amiss — a noble nature
May catch a wrench — would all were well — 't is
pity: —

And so, intending other serious matters, 210
After distasteful looks and these hard fractions,
With certain half-caps and cold-moving nods
They froze me into silence.

200 *most general way*] most compendious, or customary, way.

205 *at fall*] at the ebb, on the decline.

209 *catch a wrench*] go astray; get into difficulties.

210 *intending*] pretending; a common usage. Cf. *Rich. III.*, III, v, 8:
"Intending deep suspicion."

211 *hard fractions*] harsh fragmentary or abrupt remarks.

212 *With . . . nods*] With the barest of salutations and chilling nods;
"half-caps" means "caps barely touched in the way of courtesy";
"cap" is often used for "salute."

TIM. You gods, reward them !
 Prithee, man, look cheerly. These old fellows
 Have their ingratitude in them hereditary :
 Their blood is caked, 't is cold, it seldom flows ;
 'T is lack of kindly warmth they are not kind ;
 And nature, as it grows again toward earth,
 Is fashion'd for the journey, dull and heavy.
 [To a Serv.] Go to Ventidius. [To Flav.] Prithee, be not
 sad;

220

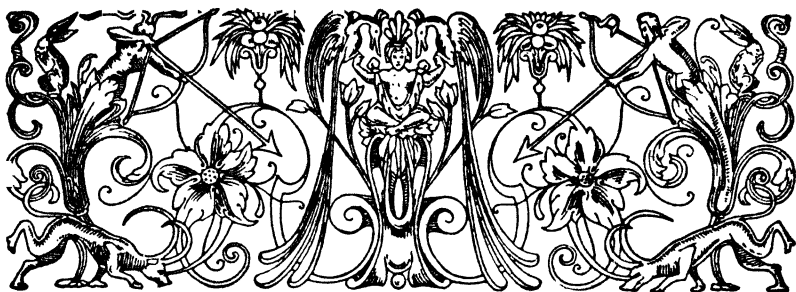
Thou art true and honest ; ingeniously I speak,
 No blame belongs to thee. [To Serv.] Ventidius lately
 Buried his father, by whose death he's stepp'd
 Into a great estate : when he was poor,
 Imprison'd, and in scarcity of friends,
 I clear'd him with five talents : greet him from me ;
 Bid him suppose some good necessity
 Touches his friend, which craves to be remember'd
 With those five talents. [Exit Serv.] [To Flav.] That had,
 give't these fellows
 To whom 't is instant due. Ne'er speak or think 230
 That Timon's fortunes 'mong his friends can sink.

FLAV. I would I could not think it : that thought is
 bounty's foe ;
 Being free itself, it thinks all others so. [Exeunt.]

221 *ingeniously*] The word here and elsewhere is used in much the same
 sense as "*ingenuously*," which is substituted in the Fourth Folio
 (for *ingeniously* of the three earlier Folios). The two forms are
 often found quite indiscriminately.

227 *good necessity*] honest and genuine need.

233 *free*] liberal, generous.

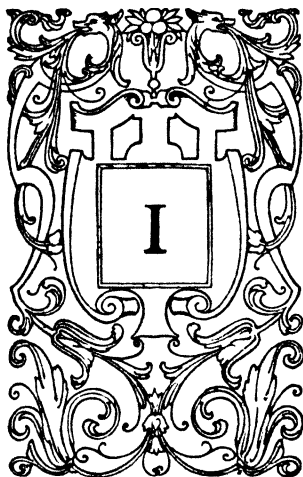


ACT THIRD — SCENE I

A ROOM IN LUCULLUS'S HOUSE

FLAMINIUS *waiting. Enter a Servant to him*

SERVANT



HAVE TOLD MY LORD
of you; he is coming down to
you.

FLAM. I thank you, sir.

Enter LUCULLUS

SERV. Here's my lord.

LUCUL. [*Aside*] One of Lord Timon's men? a gift, I warrant. Why, this hits right; I dreamt of a silver basin and ewer to-night. Flaminius, honest Flaminius; you are very respectively welcome, sir. Fill me some wine. [*Exit Servant.*] And how does that honourable, complete, free-hearted gentleman of Athens, thy very bountiful good lord and 10 master?

8 *very respectively*] with great respect.

FLAM. His health is well, sir.

LUCUL. I am right glad that his health is well, sir: and what hast thou there under thy cloak, pretty Flaminius?

FLAM. Faith, nothing but an empty box, sir; which, in my lord's behalf, I come to entreat your honour to supply; who, having great and instant occasion to use fifty talents, hath sent to your lordship to furnish him, nothing doubting your present assistance therein. 20

LUCUL. La, la, la, la! "nothing doubting," says he? Alas, good lord! a noble gentleman 't is, if he would not keep so good a house. Many a time and often I ha' dined with him, and told him on't; and come again to supper to him, of purpose to have him spend less; and yet he would embrace no counsel, take no warning by my coming. Every man has his fault, and honesty is his: I ha' told him on't, but I could ne'er get him from 't.

Re-enter Servant, with wine

SERV. Please your lordship, here is the wine. 30

LUCUL. Flaminius, I have noted thee always wise. Here's to thee.

FLAM. Your lordship speaks your pleasure.

LUCUL. I have observed thee always for a towardly prompt spirit — give thee thy due — and one that knows what belongs to reason; and canst use the time well, if the time use thee well: good parts in thee. [*To Serv.*]

19 *talents*] here incorrectly used in the sense of a coin of about a pound's value. See note on I, i, 98, *supra*.

27 *honesty*] generosity.

Get you gone, sirrah. [*Exit Serv.*] Draw nearer, honest Flaminius. Thy lord's a bountiful gentleman: but thou art wise; and thou knowest well enough, although thou 40 comest to me, that this is no time to lend money, especially upon bare friendship, without security. Here's three solidares for thee: good boy, wink at me, and say thou saw'st me not. Fare thee well.

FLAM. Is't possible the world should so much differ, And we alive that lived? Fly, damned baseness, To him that worships thee! [*Throwing back the money.*]

LUCUL. Ha! now I see thou art a fool, and fit for thy master. [*Exit.*]

FLAM. May these add to the number that may scald thee!

50

Let molten coin be thy damnation,
Thou disease of a friend, and not himself!
Has friendship such a faint and milky heart,
It turns in less than two nights? O you gods,

43 *solidares*] coins of small value. The word is not known elsewhere. It seems to be crudely compounded of "solidus" and "denarius." Shakespeare may have confused "soldo," an Italian coin worth about a shilling, with "solidus," a gold coin of the later Roman empire worth about twelve shillings.

45-46 *the world . . . that lived*] the world should undergo so much change and we who were living in the old state should still be living in the new.

51 *Let molten coin be thy damnation*] It was a common belief that the covetous and avaricious were punished in hell by having molten coin poured down their throats.

52 *Thou disease of a friend*] Cf. *Lear*, II, iv, 220-221: "my daughter; Or rather a disease that's in my flesh."

I feel my master's passion! this slave,
Unto his honour, has my lord's meat in him:
Why should it thrive and turn to nutriment,
When he is turn'd to poison?
O, may diseases only work upon't!
And, when he's sick to death, let not that part of
nature 60
Which my lord paid for, be of any power
To expel sickness, but prolong his hour! [Exit.

SCENE II — A PUBLIC PLACE

Enter LUCIUS, with three Strangers

LUC. Who, the Lord Timon? he is my very good friend, and an honourable gentleman.

FIRST STRAN. We know him for no less, though we are but strangers to him. But I can tell you one thing, my lord, and which I hear from common rumours: now Lord Timon's happy hours are done and past, and his estate shrinks from him.

LUC. Fie, no, do not believe it; he cannot want for money.

SEC. STRAN. But believe you this, my lord, that not 10
long ago one of his men was with the Lord Lucullus to

55 *passion*] anguish.

56 *Unto his honour*] By way of adding to his repute. Lucullus has
derived honour from having fed at Timon's table.

62 *his hour*] its hour, the hour of sickness.

SCENE II TIMON OF ATHENS

borrow so many talents; nay, urged extremely for't, and showed what necessity belonged to't, and yet was denied.

LUC. How!

SEC. STRAN. I tell you, denied, my lord.

LUC. What a strange case was that! now, before the gods, I am ashamed on't. Denied that honourable man! there was very little honour showed in't. For my own part, I must needs confess, I have received some small kindnesses from him, as money, plate, jewels, and 20 such-like trifles, nothing comparing to his; yet, had he mistook him and sent to me, I should ne'er have denied his occasion so many talents.

Enter SERVILIUS

SER. See, by good hap, yonder's my lord; I have sweat to see his honour. My honoured lord!

LUC. Servilius! you are kindly met, sir. Fare thee well: commend me to thy honourable virtuous lord, my very exquisite friend.

SER. May it please your honour, my lord hath sent —

LUC. Ha! what has he sent? I am so much endeared 30 to that lord; he's ever sending: how shall I thank him, think'st thou? And what has he sent now?

SER. Has only sent his present occasion now, my

12 *so many*] Thus the Folios. Theobald substituted *fifty*, the sum mentioned III, ii, 19, *supra*; cf. line 23, *infra*.

21-22 *had he mistook him and sent to me*] had Timon realized that he had misapprehended Lucullus, and had applied to me instead.

lord; requesting your lordship to supply his instant use with so many talents.

LUC. I know his lordship is but merry with me; He cannot want fifty five hundred talents.

SER. But in the mean time he wants less, my lord. If his occasion were not virtuous,
I should not urge it half so faithfully. 40

LUC. Dost thou speak seriously, Servilius?

SER. Upon my soul, 't is true, sir.

LUC. What a wicked beast was I to disfurnish myself against such a good time, when I might ha' shown myself honourable! how unluckily it happened, that I should purchase the day before for a little part, and undo a great deal of honour! Servilius, now, before the gods, I am not able to do — the more beast, I say: — I was sending to use Lord Timon myself, these gentlemen can witness; but I would not, for the wealth of Athens, 50 I had done 't now. Commend me bountifully to his good lordship; and I hope his honour will conceive the fairest of me, because I have no power to be kind: and tell him this from me, I count it one of my greatest afflictions, say, that I cannot pleasure such an honourable

37 *fifty five hundred talents*] See note on III, i, 19, *supra*. Lucius is ironically suggesting that Timon cannot be without (*i. e.*, must be worth) any number of talents.

39 *If his occasion were not virtuous*] If his need were not due to reputable causes. Cf. II, ii, 227, *supra*.

40 *faithfully*] zealously.

45-47 *that I should purchase . . . honour*] that I should make a bargain which brought me an insignificant degree of honour, and thus forego the present opportunity of acquiring a great deal of honour.

gentleman. Good Servilius, will you befriend me so far as to use mine own words to him?

SER. Yes, sir, I shall.

LUC. I'll look you out a good turn, Servilius.

[*Exit Servilius.*]

True, as you said, Timon is shrunk indeed; 60

And he that's once denied will hardly speed. [*Exit.*]

FIRST STRAN. Do you observe this, Hostilius?

SEC. STRAN. Ay, too well.

FIRST STRAN. Why, this is the world's soul; and
just of the same piece

Is every flatterer's spirit. Who can call him
His friend that dips in the same dish? for, in
My knowing, Timon has been this lord's father,
And kept his credit with his purse;
Supported his estate; nay, Timon's money
Has paid his men their wages: he ne'er drinks,
But Timon's silver treads upon his lip; 70
And yet — O, see the monstrousness of man
When he looks out in an ungrateful shape! —
He does deny him, in respect of his,
What charitable men afford to beggars.

THIRD STRAN. Religion groans at it.

FIRST STRAN. For mine own part,
I never tasted Timon in my life,
Nor came any of his bounties over me,
To mark me for his friend; yet, I protest,

64 *spirit*] Theobald's substitution for the Folio reading *sport*, which is difficult to explain.

73 *in respect of his*] in comparison with Lucius' own fortune. Lucius is so rich that Timon's demand is for him a mere beggar's pittance.

For his right noble mind, illustrious virtue,
 And honourable carriage,
 Had his necessity made use of me,
 I would have put my wealth into donation,
 And the best half should have return'd to him,
 So much I love his heart: but, I perceive,
 Men must learn now with pity to dispense;
 For policy sits above conscience.

80

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III — A ROOM IN SEMPRONIUS' HOUSE

Enter SEMPRONIUS, and a Servant of TIMON'S

SEM. Must he needs trouble me in't, — hum! —
 'bove all others?

He might have tried Lord Lucius or Lucullus;
 And now Ventidius is wealthy too,
 Whom he redeem'd from prison: all these
 Owe their estates unto him.

SERV.

My lord,

They have all been touch'd and found base metal, for
 They have all denied him.

SEM.

How! have they denied him?
 Has Ventidius and Lucullus denied him?

82-83 *I would have put . . . to him*] I would have treated the whole of my wealth as a fund for distribution, and bestowed the greater part of it on him. "Have return'd to" does not mean here "have been given back to," but "have fallen to him." Cf. *Hamlet*, I, i, 91-94: "a moiety . . . had *return'd* [*i. e.*, fallen] *To* . . . Fortinbras, Had he been vanquisher."

6 *touch'd*] tried or tested by the touchstone.

SCENE III TIMON OF ATHENS

And does he send to me? Three? hum!
 It shows but little love or judgement in him: 10
 Must I be his last refuge? His friends, like physicians,
 Thrive, give him over: must I take the cure upon me?
 Has much disgraced me in't; I'm angry at him,
 That might have known my place: I see no sense for't,
 But his occasions might have woo'd me first;
 For, in my conscience, I was the first man
 That e'er received gift from him:
 And does he think so backwardly of me now,
 That I'll requite it last? No:
 So it may prove an argument of laughter 20
 To the rest, and 'mongst lords I be thought a fool.
 I'd rather than the worth of thrice the sum,
 Had sent to me first, but for my mind's sake;
 I'd such a courage to do him good. But now return,
 And with their faint reply this answer join;
 Who bates mine honour shall not know my coin. [*Exit.*
 SERV. Excellent! Your lordship's a goodly villain.
 The devil knew not what he did when he made man
 politic; he crossed himself by't: and I cannot think but

12 *Thrive, give him over*] Thus the First Folio. The later Folios read
That thriv'd, give him over. Johnson ingeniously substituted *Thrice*
give him over. Cf. Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, III, v, 11-13: "*Phy-*
sicians thus With their hands full of money, use to give o'er Their
patients."

20 *an argument of laughter*] a theme for laughter.

29-30 *he crossed himself by't . . . set him clear*] he defeated his own pur-
 poses; and I cannot but think that in the end man's own villainies will
 set him clear or free of the power of the devil (who will be beaten at
 his own game in the long run, or outdone with his own weapons).

in the end the villanies of man will set him clear. How ³⁰
fairly this lord strives to appear foul! takes virtuous
copies to be wicked; like those that under hot ardent
zeal would set whole realms on fire:

Of such a nature is his politic love.

This was my lord's best hope; now all are fled,
Save only the gods: now his friends are dead,
Doors, that were ne'er acquainted with their wards
Many a bounteous year, must be employ'd
Now to guard sure their master.

And this is all a liberal course allows;

Who cannot keep his wealth must keep his house. [*Exit.* ⁴⁰

SCENE IV — A HALL IN TIMON'S HOUSE

*Enter two Servants of VARRO, and the Servant of LUCIUS, meeting
TITUS, HORTENSIUS, and other Servants of TIMON's creditors,
waiting his coming out*

FIRST VAR. SERV. Well met; good morrow, Titus
and Hortensius.

TIT. The like to you, kind Varro.

HOR.

Lucius!

What, do we meet together?

LUC. SERV.

Ay, and I think

31-32 *takes virtuous copies to be wicked*] sets models or patterns of virtue before him so as to avoid following them, so as, contrarily, to be wicked.

32-33 *like those . . . on fire*] Allusion has been detected here to the perilous fanaticism of the convinced Puritan or Anabaptist.

37 *wards*] bolts, locks.

41 *keep his house*] keep within doors (for fear of duns).

One business does command us all; for mine
Is money.

Enter PHILOTUS

PHI. Good day at once.

What do you think the hour?

LUC. SERV. So much?

LUC. SERV. Not yet.

LUC. SERV. Ay, but the days are wax'd shorter with him:

'Tis deepest winter in Lord Timon's purse;
That is, one may reach deep enough and yet
Find little.

TIT. I'll show you how to observe a strange event.

HOR. Most true, he does.

For which I wait for money.

LUC. SERV. Mark, how strange it shows,

[57]

Timon in this should pay more than he owes:
And e'en as if your lord should wear rich jewels,
And send for money for 'em.

HOR. I'm weary of this charge, the gods can witness:
I know my lord hath spent of Timon's wealth,
And now ingratitude makes it worse than stealth.

FIRST VAR. SERV. Yes, mine's three thousand crowns:
what's yours?

LUC. SERV. Five thousand mine.

30

FIRST VAR. SERV. 'T is much deep: and it should
seem by the sum

Your master's confidence was above mine;
Else, surely, his had equall'd.

Enter FLAMINIUS

TIT. One of Lord Timon's men.

LUC. SERV. Flaminius! Sir, a word: pray, is my
lord ready to come forth?

FLAM. No, indeed he is not.

TIT. We attend his lordship: pray, signify so much.

FLAM. I need not tell him that; he knows you are
too diligent.

[Exit. 40]

Enter FLAVIUS in a cloak, muffled

LUC. SERV. Ha! is not that his steward muffled so?
He goes away in a cloud: call him, call him.

TIT. Do you hear, sir?

26 of this charge] of this employment or office.

31 much deep] very large.

32-33 Your master's . . . equall'd] Your master had greater confidence
in Timon than my master had. Otherwise my master's loan to him
would have been as large as your master's.

SEC. VAR. SERV. By your leave, sir, —
 FLAV. What do ye ask of me, my friend?
 TIT. We wait for certain money here, sir.
 FLAV.

If money were as certain as your waiting,
'T were sure enough.

Why then preferr'd you not your sums and bills,
When your false masters eat of my lord's meat? 50
Then they could smile and fawn upon his debts,
And take down the interest into their gluttonous maws.
You do yourselves but wrong to stir me up;
Let me pass quietly:
Believe't, my lord and I have made an end;
I have no more to reckon, he to spend.

LUC. SERV. Ay, but this answer will not serve.

FLAV. If 't will not serve, 't is not so base as you;

For you serve knaves. [Exit.

FIRST VAR. SERV. How! what does his cashiered 60
worship mutter?

SEC. VAR. SERV. No matter what; he's poor, and that's revenge enough. Who can speak broader than he that has no house to put his head in? such may rail against great buildings.

Enter SERVILIUS

TIT. O, here's Servilius; now we shall know some answer.

SER. If I might beseech you, gentlemen, to repair some other hour, I should derive much from't; for,

63 *Who can speak broader*] Who can speak more freely.

take't of my soul, my lord leans wondrously to discontent: his comfortable temper has forsook him; he's much out of health and keeps his chamber.

LUC. SERV. Many do keep their chambers are not sick:

And if it be so far beyond his health,
Methinks he should the sooner pay his debts,
And make a clear way to the gods.

SER. Good gods!

TIT. We cannot take this for answer, sir.

FLAM. [*Within*] Servilius, help! My lord! my lord!

Enter TIMON, in a rage; FLAMINIUS following

TIM. What, are my doors opposed against my passage?
Have I been ever free, and must my house 80
Be my retentive enemy, my gaol?
The place which I have feasted, does it now,
Like all mankind, show me an iron heart?

LUC. SERV. Put in now, Titus.

TIT. My lord, here is my bill.

LUC. SERV. Here's mine.

HOR. And mine, my lord.

BOTH VAR. SERV. And ours, my lord.

74 *if it be so far beyond his health*] if it be that he is so far removed from health.

76 *make a clear way to the gods*] make his passage to heaven secure.

81 *my retentive enemy*] my enemy which keeps me prisoner.

87-88 *And mine, my lord . . . my lord*] The First Folio assigns the first of these two speeches to "1 Var.," i. e., Varro's first servant, and the second speech to "2 Var.," i. e., Varro's second servant. Capell gave the first speech to Hortensius, and Malone the second speech to the two servants of Varro speaking together. Both changes are necessary.

SCENE IV TIMON OF ATHENS

PHI. All our bills.

TIM. Knock me down with 'em : cleave me to the girdle. 90

LUC. SERV. Alas, my lord, —

TIM. Cut my heart in sums.

TIT. Mine, fifty talents.

TIM. Tell out my blood.

LUC. SERV. Five thousand crowns, my lord.

TIM. Five thousand drops pays that. What yours ? —
and yours ?

FIRST VAR. SERV. My lord, —

SEC. VAR. SERV. My lord, —

TIM. Tear me, take me, and the gods fall upon
you ! [Exit. 101]

HOR. Faith, I perceive our masters may throw their
caps at their money : these debts may well be called
desperate ones, for a madman owes 'em. [Exeunt.]

Re-enter TIMON and FLAVIUS

TIM. They have e'en put my breath from me, the
slaves. Creditors ? devils !

FLAV. My dear lord, —

TIM. What if it should be so ?

FLAV. My lord, —

TIM. I'll have it so. My steward ! 110

FLAV. Here, my lord.

90 *Knock me down with 'em*] There is a pun on the word "bills" (line 89),
which meant not only paper accounts but the halberds or weapons
carried by constables and others.

92 *in sums*] into sums of money.

102–103 *may throw . . . money*] may go hang for their money; a con-
temptuous colloquialism.

TIM. So fitly? Go, bid all my friends again,
Lucius, Lucullus, and Sempronius: all:
I'll once more feast the rascals.

FLAV. O my lord,
You only speak from your distracted soul;
There is not so much left, to furnish out
A moderate table.

TIM. Be it not in thy care;
Go,
I charge thee, invite them all: let in the tide
Of knaves once more; my cook and I'll provide. 120
[Exeunt.]

SCENE V — THE SENATE-HOUSE

The Senate sitting

FIRST SEN. My lord, you have my voice to it; the
fault's
Bloody; 't is necessary he should die:
Nothing emboldens sin so much as mercy.

SEC. SEN. Most true; the law shall bruise him.

113 *Sempronius: all*] Thus the Third and Fourth Folios. The Second Folio has the misprint *Semprovius: All*. The First Folio presents the puzzling and unmetrical reading *Sempronius Vllorxa: All*. No satisfactory explanation of *Vllorxa* has been offered. It is possibly the printer's helpless attempt to present some word or words imperfectly erased in the manuscript, such as *All lords*. Small reliance can be placed on the suggestion that it is a corruption of some combination of the Roman numerals VII and X, *i. e.*, "VII or X or" which has been explained as "seven or ten others." The better plan is to follow the example of the Second, Third, and Fourth Folios, and ignore the word.

1 *my voice*] my vote.

4 *him*] Hanmer's correction of the Folio *'em*.

Enter ALCIBIADES, attended

ALCIB. Honour, health, and compassion to the senate!

FIRST SEN. Now, captain?

ALCIB. I am an humble suitor to your virtues;
 For pity is the virtue of the law,
 And none but tyrants use it cruelly.
 It pleases time and fortune to lie heavy 10
 Upon a friend of mine, who in hot blood
 Hath stepp'd into the law, which is past depth
 To those that without heed do plunge into 't.
 He is a man, setting his fate aside,
 Of comely virtues:
 Nor did he soil the fact with cowardice —
 An honour in him which buys out his fault —
 But with a noble fury and fair spirit,
 Seeing his reputation touch'd to death,
 He did oppose his foe: 20
 And with such sober and unnoted passion
 He did behave his anger, ere 't was spent,
 As if he had but proved an argument.

FIRST SEN. You undergo too strict a paradox,
 Striving to make an ugly deed look fair:

14 *setting his fate aside*] setting aside his evil fortune.

17 *buys out*] redeems.

21 *unnoted*] unnoticeable, imperceptible.

22 *behave*] Rowe's correction of the Folio reading *behoove*. "Behave" was occasionally used as a transitive verb in the sense of "make behave," "control." Cf. Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, II, iii, 40: "But who . . . his mynd *Behaves* [*i. e.*, controls] with cares."

24 *You undergo . . . paradox*] You undertake too difficult a paradox.

Your words have took such pains, as if they labour'd
To bring manslaughter into form, and set quarrelling
Upon the head of valour; which indeed
Is valour misbegot and came into the world
When sects and factions were newly born: 39
He's truly valiant that can wisely suffer
The worst that man can breathe, and make his wrongs
His outsides, to wear them like his raiment, carelessly,
And ne'er prefer his injuries to his heart,
To bring it into danger.
If wrongs be evils and enforce us kill,
What folly 't is to hazard life for ill!

ALCIB. My lord, —

FIRST SEN. You cannot make gross sins look clear:
To revenge is no valour, but to bear.

ALCIB. My lords, then, under favour, pardon me, 40
If I speak like a captain.

Why do fond men expose themselves to battle,
And not endure all threats? sleep upon 't,
And let the foes quietly cut their throats,
Without repugnancy? If there be
Such valour in the bearing, what make we
Abroad? why then women are more valiant
That stay at home, if bearing carry it;

32 *breathe*] utter.

33 *His outsides*] Things that do not touch him inwardly.

34 *ne'er prefer . . . heart*] never take the injuries done him to heart,
never cherishes heartfelt resentment.

45 *Without repugnancy*] Without resistance.

48 *if bearing carry it*] if mere suffering of wrong carry the day, win the
victory.

And the ass more captain than the lion, the felon
 Loaden with irons wiser than the judge, 50
 If wisdom be in suffering. O my lords,
 As you are great, be pitifully good:
 Who cannot condemn rashness in cold blood?
 To kill, I grant, is sin's extremest gust;
 But in defence, by mercy, 't is most just.
 To be in anger is impiety;
 But who is man that is not angry?
 Weigh but the crime with this.

SEC. SEN. You breathe in vain.

ALCIB. In vain! His service done
 At Lacedæmon and Byzantium 60
 Were a sufficient briber for his life.

FIRST SEN. What's that?

ALCIB. I say, my lords, has done fair service,
 And slain in fight many of your enemies:
 How full of valour did he bear himself
 In the last conflict, and made plenteous wounds!

49 *the felon*] Thus Theobald and Johnson. The Folios read *the fellow*, and awkwardly place those words at the beginning of the next line.

54 *sin's extremest gust*] The outbreak or outrage of sin in its fullest development. "Gust" is probably used as in "a gust of wind." The word is also found in the sense of "gusto" or "relish" or "gratification," and if it be employed in that sense here, the line would mean that murder is sin's highest gratification.

55 *by mercy*] by your leave or pardon, as in the common expression "cry you mercy," *i. e.*, I beg your pardon (*Lear*, III, vi, 51). This is a simpler explanation than "by a merciful interpretation of law."

62 *I say . . . done*] The subject pronoun "he" is elided. The First Folio reads *Why say my Lords ha's*. Pope substantially devised the present reading.

SEC. SEN. He has made too much plenty with 'em;
He's a sworn rioter: he has a sin
That often drowns him and takes his valour prisoner:
If there were no foes, that were enough
To overcome him: in that beastly fury
He has been known to commit outrages
And cherish factions: 't is inferr'd to us,
His days are foul and his drink dangerous.

70

FIRST SEN. He dies.

ALCIB. Hard fate! he might have died in war.
My lords, if not for any parts in him —
Though his right arm might purchase his own time
And be in debt to none — yet, more to move you,
Take my deserts to his and join 'em both:
And, for I know your reverend ages love
Security, I'll pawn my victories, all
My honours to you, upon his good returns.
If by this crime he owes the law his life,
Why, let the war receive't in valiant gore;
For law is strict, and war is nothing more.

80

FIRST SEN. We are for law: he dies; urge it no more,
On height of our displeasure: friend or brother,
He forfeits his own blood that spills another.

ALCIB. Must it be so? it must not be. My lords,
I do beseech you, know me.

67 *He's a sworn rioter*] He's under oath to practice rioting.

72 *'t is inferr'd*] it is alleged or reported.

73 *his drink*] his fits of drunkenness.

75 *any parts*] any great qualities.

87 *spills another*] kills another.

SEC. SEN. How!

ALCIB. Call me to your remembrances.

THIRD SEN. What!

ALCIB. I cannot think but your age has forgot me;
It could not else be I should prove so base
To sue and be denied such common grace:
My wounds ache at you.

FIRST SEN. Do you dare our anger?
'Tis in few words, but spacious in effect;
We banish thee for ever.

ALCIB. Banish me!
Banish your dotage; banish usury,
That makes the senate ugly.

100

FIRST SEN. If, after two days' shine, Athens contain
thee,
Attend our weightier judgement. And, not to swell our
spirit,

He shall be executed presently. [Exeunt Senators.]

ALCIB. Now the gods keep you old enough, that you
may live

Only in bone, that none may look on you!
I'm worse than mad: I have kept back their foes,
While they have told their money and let out

93 *your age*] you in your age, your senility, your dotage; as in line 99,
infra.

102 *not to swell our spirit*] not further to excite our emotion, not to increase
our anger.

104-105 *that you may live . . . look on you*] that you may live till you are
only hideous skeletons, the sight of whom none can endure.

107 *told their money*] counted up their money.

Their coin upon large interest, I myself
Rich only in large hurts. All those for this?
Is this the balsam that the usuring senate
Pours into captains' wounds? Banishment!
It comes not ill; I hate not to be banish'd;
It is a cause worthy my spleen and fury,
That I may strike at Athens. I'll cheer up
My discontented troops, and lay for hearts.
'T is honour, with most lands to be at odds;
Soldiers should brook as little wrongs as gods. [Exit.

SCENE VI — A BANQUETING-ROOM IN TIMON'S
HOUSE

*Music. Tables set out: Servants attending. Enter divers Lords,
Senators and others, at several doors*

FIRST LORD. The good time of day to you, sir.

SEC. LORD. I also wish it to you. I think this honourable lord did but try us this other day.

FIRST LORD. Upon that were my thoughts tiring when we encountered: I hope it is not so low with him as he made it seem in the trial of his several friends.

115 *lay for hearts*] seek to win the affections of my soldiers.

116 *'T is honour . . . odds*] Governments are commonly so ill-administered that there are few which it is not an honour to oppose.

4 *tiring*] tearing, devouring; the word is used of hawks attacking their prey. Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 55-56: "an empty eagle . . . *Tires* 'with her beak on feathers, flesh and bone.'"

SCENE VI TIMON OF ATHENS

SEC. LORD. It should not be, by the persuasion of his new feasting.

FIRST LORD. I should think so: he hath sent me an earnest inviting, which many my near occasions did urge 10 me to put off; but he hath conjured me beyond them, and I must needs appear.

SEC. LORD. In like manner was I in debt to my importunate business, but he would not hear my excuse. I am sorry, when he sent to borrow of me, that my provision was out.

FIRST LORD. I am sick of that grief too, as I understand how all things go.

SEC. LORD. Every man here's so. What would he have borrowed of you? 20

FIRST LORD. A thousand pieces.

SEC. LORD. A thousand pieces!

FIRST LORD. What of you?

SEC. LORD. He sent to me, sir, — Here he comes.

Enter TIMON and Attendants

TIM. With all my heart, gentlemen both: and how fare you?

FIRST LORD. Ever at the best, hearing well of your lordship.

SEC. LORD. The swallow follows not summer more willing than we your lordship. 30

7-8 *by the persuasion . . . feasting*] if one might be persuaded by his new series of feasts.

11 *conjured me beyond them*] urged me so much as to give them up.

15-16 *my provision was out*] I was unprovided with funds.

TIM. [*Aside*] Nor more willingly leaves winter; such summer-birds are men. — Gentlemen, our dinner will not recompense this long stay: feast your ears with the music awhile, if they will fare so harshly o' the trumpet's sound; we shall to't presently.

FIRST LORD. I hope it remains not unkindly with your lordship, that I returned you an empty messenger.

TIM. O, sir, let it not trouble you.

SEC. LORD. My noble lord, —

TIM. Ah, my good friend, what cheer?

40

SEC. LORD. My most honourable lord, I am e'en sick of shame, that, when your lordship this other day sent to me, I was so unfortunate a beggar.

TIM. Think not on't, sir.

SEC. LORD. If you had sent but two hours before —

TIM. Let it not cumber your better remembrance.
[*The banquet brought in.*] Come, bring in all together.

SEC. LORD. All covered dishes!

FIRST LORD. Royal cheer, I warrant you.

THIRD LORD. Doubt not that, if money and the ⁵⁰ season can yield it.

FIRST LORD. How do you? What's the news?

THIRD LORD. Alcibades is banished: hear you of it?

FIRST AND SEC. LORDS. Alcibiades banished!

THIRD LORD. 'Tis so, be sure of it.

FIRST LORD. How? how?

34–35 *if they will fare . . . sound*] if they will accept such harsh fare as the trumpet's sound.

46 *Let it not cumber . . . remembrance*] Do not trouble yourself by thinking of such matters, think of pleasanter things.

49 *Royal cheer*] See note on *Merch. of Ven.*, III, ii, 241: “royal merchant.”

SEC. LORD. I pray you, upon what?

TIM. My worthy friends, will you draw near?

THIRD LORD. I'll tell you more anon. Here's a noble feast toward.

60

SEC. LORD. This is the old man still.

THIRD LORD. Will 't hold? will 't hold?

SEC. LORD. It does: but time will — and so —

THIRD LORD. I do conceive.

TIM. Each man to his stool, with that spur as he would to the lip of his mistress: your diet shall be in all places alike. Make not a city feast of it, to let the meat cool ere we can agree upon the first place: sit, sit. The gods require our thanks.

You great benefactors, sprinkle our society with 70 thankfulness. For your own gifts, make yourselves praised: but reserve still to give, lest your deities be despised. Lend to each man enough, that one need not lend to another; for, were your godheads to borrow of men, men would forsake the gods. Make the meat be beloved more than the man that gives it. Let no assembly of twenty be without a score of villains: if there sit twelve women at the table, let a dozen of them be — as they are. The rest of your fees, O gods, — the senators of Athens, together with the common lag of 80

60 toward] at hand.

79 be — as they are] a contemptuous expression implying that they are disreputable.

fees] forfeits; those who are forfeit to the divine vengeance. Thus the Folios. Hanmer suggested *foes*.

80 lag] dregs or leavings. Cf. *1 Hen. IV*, V, i, 24: "the lag end of my

people, — what is amiss in them, you gods, make suitable for destruction. For these my present friends, as they are to me nothing, so in nothing bless them, and to nothing are they welcome.

Uncover, dogs, and lap.

[*The dishes are uncovered and seen to be full of warm water.*]

SOME SPEAK. What does his lordship mean?

SOME OTHER. I know not.

TIM. May you a better feast never behold,
You knot of mouth-friends! smoke and luke-warm
water

Is your perfection. This is Timon's last;
Who stuck and spangled you with flatteries,
Washes it off, and sprinkles in your faces
Your reeking villany. [*Throwing the water in their faces.*]
Live loathed, and long,

Most smiling, smooth, detested parasites,
Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears,
You fools of fortune, trencher-friends, time's flies,
Cap-and-knee slaves, vapours, and minute-jacks!

life." "The common lag of people" is equivalent to "the scum of the people."

81-82 *what is amiss . . . destruction*] supply what is missing in them to fit them for destruction.

90 *Is your perfection*] Is like you at your best.

91 *spangled you with flatteries*] Thus the Folios. Warburton suggested *spangled with your flatteries*.

96 *time's flies*] creatures of the hour. Cf. II, ii, 173, *supra*.

97 *minute-jacks*] time-servers. Figures that struck the bells or chimes in old clocks were called "*jacks of the clock*." Cf. *Rich. II*, V, v, 60: "*his Jack o' the clock*."

SCENE VI TIMON OF ATHENS

Of man and beast the infinite malady
Crust you quite o'er! What, dost thou go?
Soft! take thy physic first — thou too — and thou: —
Stay, I will lend thee money, borrow none. 101

[Throws the dishes at them, and drives them out.]

What, all in motion? Henceforth be no feast,
Whereat a villain's not a welcome guest.
Burn, house! sink, Athens! henceforth hated be
Of Timon man and all humanity! *[Exit.]*

Re-enter the Lords, Senators, etc.

FIRST LORD. How now, my lords!

SEC. LORD. Know you the quality of Lord Timon's
fury?

THIRD LORD. Push! did you see my cap?

FOURTH LORD. I have lost my gown. 109

FIRST LORD. He's but a mad lord, and nought but
humour sways him. He gave me a jewel th' other day,
and now he has beat it out of my hat. Did you see
my jewel?

THIRD LORD. Did you see my cap?

SEC. LORD. Here 'tis.

FOURTH LORD. Here lies my gown.

FIRST LORD. Let's make no stay.

SEC. LORD. Lord Timon's mad.

THIRD LORD. I feel't upon my bones.

FOURTH LORD. One day he gives us diamonds, next
day stones. *[Exeunt.]*

98 *the infinite malady*] maladies of infinite variety.

108 *Push!*] Pish! a term of impatience.

111 *humour*] whim, caprice.

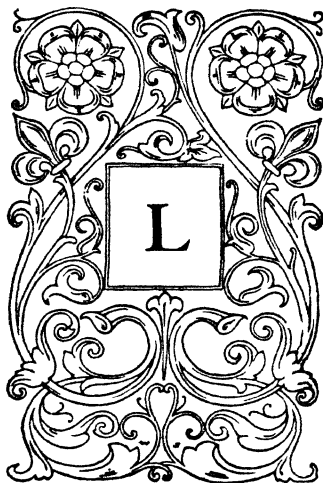


ACT FOURTH — SCENE I

WITHOUT THE WALLS OF ATHENS

Enter TIMON

TIMON



LET ME LOOK BACK UPON
thee. O thou wall,
That girdlest in those wolves,
dive in the earth,
And fence not Athens ! Matrons,
turn incontinent !
Obedience fail in children !
Slaves and fools,
Pluck the grave wrinkled senate
from the bench,
And minister in their steads !
To general filths
Convert o' the instant, green
virginity !

Do 't in your parents' eyes ! Bankrupts, hold fast ;
Rather than render back, out with your knives,

6 *general filths*] common prostitutes.

7 *Convert*] Turn ; used intransitively.

SCENE I TIMON OF ATHENS

And cut your trusters' throats! Bound servants, steal! 10
 Large-handed robbers your grave masters are
 And pill by law. Maid, to thy master's bed!
 Thy mistress is o' the brothel. Son of sixteen,
 Pluck the lined crutch from thy old limping sire,
 With it beat out his brains! Piety and fear,
 Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,
 Domestic awe, night-rest and neighbourhood,
 Instruction, manners, mysteries and trades,
 Degrees, observances, customs and laws,
 Decline to your confounding contraries, 20
 And let confusion live! Plagues incident to men,
 Your potent and infectious fevers heap
 On Athens, ripe for stroke! Thou old sciatica,
 Cripple our senators, that their limbs may halt
 As lamely as their manners! Lust and liberty
 Creep in the minds and marrows of our youth,
 That 'gainst the stream of virtue they may strive,
 And drown themselves in riot! Itches, blains,
 Sow all the Athenian bosoms, and their crop
 Be general leprosy! Breath infect breath, 30
 That their society, as their friendship, may
 Be merely poison! Nothing I'll bear from thee

12 *pill*] pillage, rob.

13 *Son*] The Second Folio's correction of the First Folio's *Some*.

14 *lined*] padded, stuffed.

20 *confounding contraries*] opposites that lead to destruction.

21 *let*] Hanmer's correction of the Folio reading *yet*, which has been defended, the phrase being interpreted to mean "yet let not dissolution come, but the miseries of confusion continue."

25 *liberty*] licentiousness.

But nakedness, thou detestable town!
Take thou that too, with multiplying bans!
Timon will to the woods, where he shall find
The unkindest beast more kinder than mankind.
The gods confound — hear me, you good gods all! —
The Athenians both within and out that wall!
And grant, as Timon grows, his hate may grow
To the whole race of mankind, high and low!
Amen.

40

[Exit.]

SCENE II — ATHENS

TIMON'S HOUSE

Enter FLAVIUS, with two or three Servants

FIRST SERV. Hear you, master steward, where's our master?

Are we undone? cast off? nothing remaining?

FLAV. Alack, my fellows, what should I say to you?
Let me be recorded by the righteous gods,
I am as poor as you.

FIRST SERV. Such a house broke!
So noble a master fall'n! All gone! and not
One friend to take his fortune by the arm,
And go along with him!

SEC. SERV. As we do turn our backs
From our companion thrown into his grave,
So his familiars to his buried fortunes

10 |

34 *multiplying bans*] accumulating or accumulated curses.

10 *his familiars . . . fortunes*] those to whom his now buried fortunes
are familiar.

Slink all away; leave their false vows with him,
Like empty purses pick'd; and his poor self,
A dedicated beggar to the air,
With his disease of all-shunn'd poverty,
Walks, like contempt, alone. More of our fellows.

Enter other Servants

FLAV. All broken implements of a ruin'd house.

THIRD SERV. Yet do our hearts wear Timon's livery;
That see I by our faces; we are fellows still,
Serving alike in sorrow: leak'd is our bark,
And we, poor mates, stand on the dying deck, 20
Hearing the surges threat: we must all part
Into this sea of air.

FLAV. Good fellows all,
The latest of my wealth I'll share amongst you.
Wherever we shall meet, for Timon's sake
Let's yet be fellows; let's shake our heads, and say,
As 't were a knell unto our master's fortunes,
"We have seen better days." Let each take some.
Nay, put out all your hands. Not one word more:
Thus part we rich in sorrow, parting poor.

[Servants embrace, and part several ways.]

O, the fierce wretchedness that glory brings us! 30
Who would not wish to be from wealth exempt,
Since riches point to misery and contempt?
Who would be so mock'd with glory? or to live
But in a dream of friendship?

15 *like contempt*] like an object of contempt. Cf. *Tw. Night*, II, v, 183:

"it cannot but turn him into a notable *contempt*."

20 *dying*] fatal, doomed.

To have his pomp and all what state compounds
 But only painted, like his varnish'd friends?
 Poor honest lord, brought low by his own heart,
 Undone by goodness! Strange, unusual blood,
 When man's worst sin is, he does too much good!
 Who then dares to be half so kind again? 40
 For bounty, that makes gods, does still mar men.
 My dearest lord, blest to be most accursed,
 Rich only to be wretched, thy great fortunes
 Are made thy chief afflictions. Alas, kind lord!
 He's flung in rage from this ingrateful seat
 Of monstrous friends; nor has he with him to
 Supply his life, or that which can command it.
 I'll follow, and inquire him out:
 I'll ever serve his mind with my best will;
 Whilst I have gold, I'll be his steward still. [Exit. 50]

SCENE III — WOODS AND CAVE, NEAR THE
SEA-SHORE

Enter TIMON, from the cave

TIM. O blessed breeding sun, draw from the earth
 Rotten humidity; below thy sister's orb
 Infect the air! Twinn'd brothers of one womb,

35 all what state compounds] all that which composes dignity.

38 blood] disposition, propensity.

2 Rotten humidity] Dampness which rots. Cf. *Cor.*, II, iii, 31: "rotten dews."

thy sister's orb] orb of the moon, which was commonly regarded as the sister of the sun.

Whose procreation, residence and birth
 Scarce is dividant, touch them with several fortunes,
 The greater scorns the lesser: not nature,
 To whom all sores lay siege, can bear great fortune
 But by contempt of nature.

Raise me this beggar and deny't that lord,
 The senator shall bear contempt hereditary,
 The beggar native honour.

10

It is the pasture lards the rother's sides,
 The want that makes him lean. Who dares, who dares,
 In purity of manhood stand upright,
 And say "This man's a flatterer"? if one be,
 So are they all; for every guise of fortune
 Is smooth'd by that below: the leamed pate
 Ducks to the golden fool: all is oblique;

5 *dividant*] divisible or divided.

6-8 *not nature . . . of nature*] human nature, the prey of all degrading diseases, cannot suffer excess of good fortune without evincing a disregard of natural ties.

9 *Raise me . . . lord*] "me" is the ethic dative. In "deny't" the object "it" is "the excess of good fortune" implicitly derived from the previous sentence.

11 *native honour*] honour of the kind that is commonly hereditary.

12 *rother's*] Singer's emendation of the Folio reading *Brothers*. "Rother" though a somewhat archaic word is frequently found in Elizabethan literature in the sense of "horned beasts," especially oxen and cows. "Rother market" was and is the name of a chief thoroughfare — formerly the cattle-market — of Stratford-on-Avon. Golding's Ovid has the phrase "herds of *rother* beasts."

16-17 *every guise . . . below*] every degree of fortune is flattered or fawned upon by the one below it.

18 *all is oblique*] all is crooked: Pope's ingenious correction of the Folio reading *All's oblique*.

There's nothing level in our cursed natures
 But direct villany. Therefore be abhorr'd 20
 All feasts, societies and throngs of men!
 His semblable, yea, himself, Timon disdains:
 Destruction fang mankind! Earth, yield me roots!
[Digging.]

Who seeks for better of thee, sauce his palate
 With thy most operant poison! What is here?
 Gold? yellow, glittering, precious gold? No, gods,
 I am no idle votarist: roots, you clear heavens!
 Thus much of this will make black white, foul fair,
 Wrong right, base noble, old young, coward valiant.
 Ha, you gods! why this? what this, you gods? Why,
30
 this

Will lug your priests and servants from your sides,
 Pluck stout men's pillows from below their heads:

19 *level*] in the straight line, without ups and downs; the converse of
 "oblique" (line 18).

22 *His semblable*] His like, his self. Cf. *Hamlet*, V, ii, 118: "His *semblable* is his mirror."

23 *fang*] seize or grip with the teeth.

27 *no idle votarist*] no insincere suppliant or worshipper. Timon means
 here that he is praying the earth to give him roots, and that he means
 what he says; gold will not serve his turn.

32 *Pluck stout men's pillows . . . heads*] An allusion to the method of hastening death which was said to be commonly practised by nurses. Cf. Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, Act II, Sc. iii (ed. Gifford, p. 186): "in his next fit we may let him go. 'T is but to *pull the pillow from his head*, and he is throttled." *Stout men* — the old reading, for which *sick men* is often substituted — doubtless means men strong enough to resist disease, if they are nursed with proper care.

This yellow slave
Will knit and break religions; bless the accursed;
Make the hoar leprosy adored; place thieves,
And give them title, knee and approbation
With senators on the bench: this is it
That makes the wappen'd widow wed again;
She, whom the spital-house and ulcerous sores
Would cast the gorge at, this embalms and spices 40
To the April day again. Come, damned earth,
Thou common whore of mankind, that put'st odds
Among the rout of nations, I will make thee
Do thy right nature. [*March afar off.*] Ha! a drum?
Thou'rt quick,

35 *hoar leprosy*] leprosy which makes the skin white as snow. Cf. 2 *Kings*, v, 27: "a leper as white as snow," and line 154, *infra*, where "hoar" means "strike with leprous disease."

38 *wappen'd*] incontinent, unchaste. The word is not found elsewhere, but is obviously formed from the verb "wap," which means "indulge in sexual intercourse." "Wapper'd" which is still in provincial use for "fatigued," "worn-out," is substituted by some editors. "Unwappered" with the meaning of "innocent," "untried," is found in *Two Noble Kinsmen*, V, iv, 10.

39 *the spital-house . . . sores*] the hospital with its sufferers from ulcerous sores.

40-41 *spices To the April day again*] invests with all the perfumed freshness of early spring once more. Cf. *Sonnet* iii, 10: "the lovely April of her prime."

42-44 *put'st odds . . . nature*] causest enmity among the noisy multitude of nations. I will make thee, gold, perform the office that rightly appertains to thee, i. e., of keeping thyself buried underground.

44 *quick*] alive.

But yet I'll bury thee: thou'lt go, strong thief,
 When gouty keepers of thee cannot stand:
 Nay, stay thou out for earnest. *[Keeping some gold.]*

*Enter ALCIBIADES, with drum and fife, in warlike manner;
 PHRYNIA and TIMANDRA*

ALCIB. What art thou there? speak.

TIM. A beast, as thou art. The canker gnaw thy heart,
 For showing me again the eyes of man!

ALCIB. What is thy name? Is man so hateful to thee, 50
 That art thyself a man?

TIM. I am misanthropos, and hate mankind.
 For thy part, I do wish thou wert a dog,
 That I might love thee something.

ALCIB. I know thee well;
 But in thy fortunes am unlearn'd and strange.

TIM. I know thee too; and more than that I know thee
 I not desire to know. Follow thy drum;
 With man's blood paint the ground, gules, gules:
 Religious canons, civil laws are cruel;
 Then what should war be? This fell whore of thine 60
 Hath in her more destruction than thy sword,
 For all her cherubin look.

45 *thou'lt go, strong thief]* thou wilt retain thy powers of movement, thou powerful villain.

47 *earnest]* earnest-money, hansel; the sum of money paid as preliminary to a bargain. Cf. line 167, *infra*.

52 *I am misanthropos]* Cf. the marginal note in North's translation of Plutarch's Life of Mark Antony, ch. 38: "Antonius followeth the life and example of *Timon Misanthropos* the Athenian."

58 *gules]* the heraldic term for "red."

SCENE III TIMON OF ATHENS

63-64 *I will not . . . lips again*] I will not take away the venereal disease from thy lips by kissing thee; rather let the disease continue to infect thee. It was supposed that the communication to another of the venereal infection left the infector free.

Give them diseases, leaving with thee their lust.
Make use of thy salt hours: season the slaves
For tubs and baths; bring down rose-cheeked youth
To the tub-fast and the diet.

TIMAN. Hang thee, monster!

ALCIB. Pardon him, sweet Timandra, for his wits
Are drown'd and lost in his calamities.

I have but little gold of late, brave Timon, 90
The want whereof doth daily make revolt
In my penurious band: I have heard, and grieved,
How cursed Athens, mindless of thy worth,
Forgetting thy great deeds, when neighbour states,
But for thy sword and fortune, trod upon them —

TIM. I prithee, beat thy drum, and get thee gone.

ALCIB. I am thy friend and pity thee, dear Timon.

TIM. How dost thou pity him whom thou dost trouble?
I had rather be alone.

ALCIB. Why, fare thee well:
Here is some gold for thee.

TIM. Keep it, I cannot eat it. 100

ALCIB. When I have laid proud Athens on a heap —

TIM. Warr'st thou 'gainst Athens?

ALCIB. Ay, Timon, and have cause.

TIM. The gods confound them all in thy conquest,
And thee after, when thou hast conquer'd!

85 *salt*] *lustful*.

87 *the tub-fast and the diet*] Theobald's correction of the Folio reading *Fubfast*. The reference is to the curative bath regimen which was commonly prescribed for the venereal disease. "Tub-fast" means the abstinence from food which accompanied the bath treatment.

ALCIB. Why me, Timon?

TIM. That by killing of villains
 Thou wast born to conquer my country.
 Put up thy gold: go on, — here's gold, — go on;
 Be as a planetary plague, when Jove
 Will o'er some high-iced city hang his poison
 In the sick air: let not thy sword skip one: 110
 Pity not honour'd age for his white beard;
 He is an usurer: strike me the counterfeit matron;
 It is her habit only that is honest,
 Herself's a bawd: let not the virgin's cheek
 Make soft thy trenchant sword; for those milk-paps,
 That through the window-bars bore at men's eyes,
 Are not within the leaf of pity writ,
 But set them down horrible traitors: spare not the babe
 Whose dimpled smiles from fools exhaust their mercy;
 Think it a bastard whom the oracle 120
 Hath doubtfully pronounced thy throat shall cut,
 And mince it sans remorse: swear against objects;

108 *a planetary plague*] a pestilence caused by planetary influence. Cf. *Rich. II*, I, iii, 284: "Devouring pestilence hangs in our air."

116 *window-bars*] Thus Johnson. The Folios read *window Barne*, which seems unintelligible. The reference apparently is to the bands of crossbar, or lattice-work embroidery, which sometimes covered women's bosoms across a lowcut bodice.

119 *exhaust*] draw forth.

121 *doubtfully*] ambiguously. There may be a reference to the story of Œdipus whose father Laius was warned by the oracle that he would perish by the hands of his son, and the prophecy was fulfilled.

122 *objects*] objects exciting sympathy. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, IV, v, 106: "tender *objects*." For "*swear against objects*," cf. *Sonnet clii*, 12: "Or made them [*i. e.*, eyes] *swear against the thing they see*."

Put armour on thine ears and on thine eyes,
Whose proof nor yells of mothers, maids, nor babes,
Nor sight of priests in holy vestments bleeding,
Shall pierce a jot. There's gold to pay thy soldiers:
Make large confusion; and, thy fury spent,
Confounded be thyself! Speak not, be gone.

ALCIB. Hast thou gold yet? I'll take the gold thou
givest me,
Not all thy counsel. 130

TIM. Dost thou or dost thou not, heaven's curse upon
thee!

PHR. AND TIMAN. Give us some gold, good Timon:
hast thou more?

TIM. Enough to make a whore forswear her trade,
And to make whores, a bawd. Hold up, you sluts,
Your aprons mountant: you are not oathable;
Although, I know, you'll swear, terribly swear,
Into strong shudders and to heavenly agues,
The immortal gods that hear you; spare your oaths,
I'll trust to your conditions: be whores still;
And he whose pious breath seeks to convert you, 140
Be strong in whore, allure him, burn him up;

134 *to make whores, a bawd*] to induce a bawd to forswear her trade of making whores. The words are inverted.

135 *mountant*] a heraldic term for "lifted up."
oathable] capable of truthfully taking an oath.

139 *I'll trust to your conditions*] I'll trust to your dispositions. Timon means that he is aware that the women would be quite willing to swear that they would abandon their immoral courses; but that he'll trust to their natural inclinations to keep them what they are.

Let your close fire predominate his smoke,
And be no turncoats: yet may your pains, six months,
Be quite contrary: and thatch your poor thin roofs
With burdens of the dead; — some that were hang'd,
No matter: — wear them, betray with them: whore still;
Paint till a horse may mire upon your face:
A pox of wrinkles!

PHR. AND TIMAN. Well, more gold: what then?
Believe't that we'll do any thing for gold.

TIM. Consumptions sow 150
In hollow bones of man; strike their sharp shins,
And mar men's spurring. Crack the lawyer's voice,
That he may never more false title plead,
Nor sound his quilllets shrilly: hoar the flamen,
That scolds against the quality of flesh
And not believes himself: down with the nose,

142 *Let your close fire . . . smoke*] Let your secret fire of lust prevail over
his cloudy talk.

143-145 *yet may your pains . . . of the dead*] yet your labours or pains
should for six months have quite a different character. They should
be applied to repair of the disorders of debauchery. Among other
things you must cover your heads which your vicious indulgences
have made bald with false locks obtained from the dead. Cf. *Sonnet*
lxviii, 5-7, "the golden tresses of the dead, The right of sepulchres,
were shorn away, To live a second life on second head."

147 *mire*] stick in the mire.

154 *quilllets*] quidlibets, nice legal points.

hoar the flamen] make the priest rotten with disease "Hoar" as a verb
is rare. But the adjective in the sense of "rotten" is not uncommon.
Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, II, iv, 130: "an old hare *hoar* [*i. e.*, white with
mouldiness]." At line 35, *supra*, the adjective "hoar" is applied to
"leprosy."

Down with it flat; take the bridge quite away
Of him that, his particular to foresee,
Smells from the general weal: make curl'd-pate ruffians
bald;

And let the unscarr'd braggarts of the war 160
Derive some pain from you: plague all;
That your activity may defeat and quell
The source of all erection. There's more gold:
Do you damn others, and let this damn you,
And ditches grave you all!

PHR. AND TIMON. More counsel with more money,
bounteous Timon.

TIM. More whore, more mischief first; I have given
you earnest.

ALCIB. Strike up the drum towards Athens! Fare-
well, Timon:

If I thrive well, I'll visit thee again.

TIM. If I hope well, I'll never see thee more. 170

ALCIB. I never did thee harm.

TIM. Yes, thou spokest well of me.

ALCIB. Call'st thou that harm?

TIM. Men daily find it. Get thee away, and take
Thy beagles with thee.

ALCIB. We but offend him. Strike!

[*Drum beats. Exeunt Alcibiades, Phrynia, and Timandra.*]

158-159 *him that . . . general weal*] the man who, in order to hunt after
his private interests, abandons the scent of a public good. The
metaphor is from dogs hunting.

165 *grave*] entomb.

167 *earnest*] earnest-money. Cf. line 47, *supra*.

174 *beagles*] a small breed of dogs following their masters very closely.

SCENE III TIMON OF ATHENS

TIM. That nature, being sick of man's unkindness,
Should yet be hungry! Common mother, thou,
[Digging.

Whose womb unmeasurable and infinite breast
Teems, and feeds all; whose self-same mettle,
Whereof thy proud child, arrogant man, is puff'd,
Engenders the black toad and adder blue, 180
The gilded newt and eyeless venom'd worm,
With all the abhorred births below crisp heaven
Whereon Hyperion's quickening fire doth shine;
Yield him, who all thy human sons doth hate,
From forth thy plenteous bosom one poor root!
Ensear thy fertile and conceptious womb,
Let it no more bring out ingrateful man!
Go great with tigers, dragons, wolves and bears;
Teem with new monsters, whom thy upward face
Hath to the marbled mansion all above 190
Never presented! — O, a root! dear thanks! —
Dry up thy marrows, vines, and plough-torn leas;

181 *eyeless venom'd worm*] The blindworm, which, contrary to popular belief, is not venomous.

182 *crisp*] apparently "shining" as in "the *crisp'd* morn" in Robert An-
ton's *The Philosopher's Satire*, 1616. Cotgrave *Fr. Engl. Dict.* explains
"crespu" as "crisp'd, sleeked, shining." "Crisp" is more commonly
applied to the clouds in the sense of "curled" or "wavy."

183 *Hyperion*] the sun-god.

186 *conceptious*] conceiving.

187 *bring out*] bear, give birth to.

190 *marbled mansion all above*] Cf. *Othello*, III, iii, 464: "by yond
marble heaven." "Marble" or "marbled" was a conventional epi-
thet for the firmament. It was regarded as solid and everlasting.

192 *marrows*] fat lands, which produce the "morsels unctuous" of line 194.

Whereof ingrateful man, with liquorish draughts
And morsels unctuous, greases his pure mind,
That from it all consideration slips!

Enter APEMANTUS

More man? plague, plague!

APEM. I was directed hither: men report
Thou dost affect my manners, and dost use them.

TIM. 'Tis then because thou dost not keep a dog,
Whom I would imitate: consumption catch thee! 200

APEM. This is in thee a nature but infected;
A poor unmanly melancholy sprung
From change of fortune. Why this spade? this place?
This slave-like habit? and these looks of care?
Thy flatterers yet wear silk, drink wine, lie soft,
Hug their diseased perfumes and have forgot
That ever Timon was. Shame not these woods
By putting on the cunning of a carper.
Be thou a flatterer now, and seek to thrive
By that which has undone thee: hinge thy knee, 210
And let his very breath whom thou'lt observe
Blow off thy cap; praise his most vicious strain,
And call it excellent: thou wast told thus;

201 *This is in thee . . . infected*] This is your nature merely infected
by disease; this is not your normal state.

203 *fortune*] Rowe's correction of the *future* of the Folios.

206 *their diseased perfumes*] their perfumed mistresses infected with
disease. Cf. *Othello*, IV, i, 144: "'T is such another fitchew! marry,
a *perfumed* one."

208 *the cunning of a carper*] the counterfeit of a faultfinder.

213 *told*] flattered.

Thou gavest thine ears like tapsters that bade welcome
To knaves and all approachers: 'tis most just
That thou turn rascal; hadst thou wealth again,
Rascals should have't. Do not assume my likeness.

TIM. Were I like thee, I'd throw away myself.

APEM. Thou hast cast away thyself, being like thyself,
 A madman so long, now a fool. What, think'st
 That the bleak air, thy boisterous chamberlain,
 Will put thy shirt on warm? will these moss'd trees,
 That have outlived the eagle, page thy heels,
 And skip when thou point'st out? will the cold brook,
 Candied with ice, caudle thy morning taste,
 To cure thy o'er-night's surfeit? Call the creatures
 Whose naked natures live in all the spite
 Of wreakful heaven, whose bare unhoused trunks,
 To the conflicting elements exposed,
 Answer mere nature; bid them flatter thee;
 O, thou shalt find —

TIM. A fool of thee: depart.

APEM. I love thee better now than e'er I did.

TIM. I hate thee worse.

APEM. Why?

TIM. Thou flatter'st misery.

214 *like tapsters that bade welcome*] like shrill-tongued tapsters answering every call.

222 *moss'd trees*] Hanmer's correction of the Folio reading *moist trees* which may be right. But cf. *As you like it*, IV, iii, 103: "Under an oak whose boughs were *moss'd with age*."

225 *caudle*] refresh like a warming drink.

228 *wreakful*] vengeful, full of vengeance.

230 *Answer mere nature*] Satisfy the bare needs of nature.

APEM. I flatter not, but say thou art a caitiff.

TIM. Why dost thou seek me out?

APEM. To vex thee.

TIM. Always a villain's office or a fool's.

Dost please thyself in't?

APEM. Ay.

TIM. What! a knave too?

APEM. If thou didst put this sour-cold habit on
To castigate thy pride, 't were well: but thou
Dost it enforcedly; thou'ldst courtier be again, 240
Wert thou not beggar. Willing misery
Outlives incertain pomp, is crown'd before:
The one is filling still, never complete,
The other at high wish: best state, contentless,
Hath a distracted and most wretched being,
Worse than the worst, content.

Thou shouldst desire to die, being miserable.

TIM. Not by his breath that is more miserable.

Thou art a slave, whom Fortune's tender arm
With favour never clasp'd, but bred a dog. 250

237 *a knave too?*] Timon implies that he already knew Apemantus for a fool, but the admission that he is vexing him designedly proves him a knave in addition.

241-246 *Willing misery . . . worst, content*] Misery or beggary that is voluntarily assumed lives longer than (or surpasses) unstable pomp, and realises its aim first. The desire of pomp, though always receiving sustenance, is never satisfied; pursuit of misery or beggary readily obtains the height of its wish; the best condition of life, which inevitably lacks contentment, has a distracted and most wretched existence, a condition far worse than the worst and poorest condition when linked with a sense of contentment.

248 *by his breath that*] by the word of him who.

Hadst thou, like us from our first swath, proceeded
The sweet degrees that this brief world affords
To such as may the passive drugs of it
Freely command, thou wouldst have plunged thyself
In general riot, melted down thy youth
In different beds of lust, and never learn'd
The icy precepts of respect, but follow'd
The sugar'd game before thee. But myself,
Who had the world as my confectionary,
The mouths, the tongues, the eyes and hearts of men 260
At duty, more than I could frame employment;
That numberless upon me stuck, as leaves

251 *from our first swath*] from our earliest days, since we wore the swathing clothes of infancy.

251-252 *proceeded The sweet degrees*] gone through or experienced the pleasant grades (of life). The figurative language — “proceeded” and “degrees” — seems to be taken from academic graduation. At line 267, *infra*, “commence” continues the academic terminology. Cf. 2 *Hen. IV*, IV, iii, 114: “till sack *commences* it” and note.

253 *drugs*] Thus substantially all the Folios. Delius substituted *drudges* which seems to have been spelt *drugges* in early times. It is difficult to give “drugs” its ordinary meaning of “medicines” or “medicaments.” It may mean here “commodities” in a very general sense. “Passive” means “obedient” or “submissive.”

257 *icy precepts of respect*] cold precepts of prudence.

258-265 *But myself . . . that blows*] The meaning of this passage is clear, though the grammatical construction is elliptical. “But myself,” the subject of the sentence, has no verb; these opening words are absorbed in a dependent chain of relative clauses, which fail to complete the sentence. “That” (*i. e.*, who) in line 262 is the relative, with “men” of line 260 for antecedent; it governs the verbs “have . . . fell” (*i. e.*, fallen) and “left” (line 264).

259 *confectionary*] store of sweetmeats.

Do on the oak, have with one winter's brush
Fell from their boughs, and left me open, bare
For every storm that blows: I, to bear this,
That never knew but better, is some burden:
Thy nature did commence in sufferance, time
Hath made thee hard in't. Why shouldst thou hate men?
They never flatter'd thee: what hast thou given?
If thou wilt curse, thy father, that poor rag, 270
Must be thy subject, who in spite put stuff
To some she beggar and compounded thee,
Poor rogue hereditary. Hence, be gone!
If thou hadst not been born the worst of men,
Thou hadst been a knave and flatterer.

APEM. Art thou proud yet?

TIM. Ay, that I am not thee.

APEM. I, that I was

No prodigal.

TIM. I, that I am one now:

Were all the wealth I have shut up in thee,
I'd give thee leave to hang it. Get thee gone.

That the whole life of Athens were in this! 280

Thus would I eat it. [Eating a root.

APEM. Here; I will mend thy feast.

[Offering him a root.

TIM. First mend my company; take away thyself.

APEM. So I shall mend mine own, by the lack of thine.

265 *I, to bear this*] My endurance of this. The construction is still irregular.

270 *that poor rag*] a contemptuous term of abuse.

282 *my company*] Rowe's change for the Folio reading *thy company*.

APEM. An thou hadst hated meddlers sooner, thou shouldst have loved thyself better now. What man didst thou ever know unthrift that was beloved after his means?

TIM. Who, without those means thou talk'st of, didst thou ever know beloved? 311

APEM. Myself.

TIM. I understand thee; thou hadst some means to keep a dog.

APEM. What things in the world canst thou nearest compare to thy flatterers?

TIM. Women nearest; but men, men are the things themselves. What wouldst thou do with the world, Apemantus, if it lay in thy power?

APEM. Give it the beasts, to be rid of the men. 320

TIM. Wouldst thou have thyself fall in the confusion of men, and remain a beast with the beasts?

APEM. Ay, Timon.

TIM. A beastly ambition, which the gods grant thee t' attain to! If thou wert the lion, the fox would beguile thee: if thou wert the lamb, the fox would eat thee: if thou wert the fox, the lion would suspect thee, when peradventure thou wert accused by the ass: if thou wert the ass, thy dulness would torment thee, and still thou livedst but as a breakfast to the wolf: if thou wert the wolf, thy greediness would afflict thee, and oft thou

308-309 *What man . . . his means*] What spendthrift didst thou ever know who was beloved after his means were exhausted?

321 *confusion*] ruin, destruction.

shouldst hazard thy life for thy dinner: wert thou the unicorn, pride and wrath would confound thee, and make thine own self the conquest of thy fury: wert thou a bear, thou wouldst be killed by the horse: wert thou a horse, thou wouldst be seized by the leopard: wert thou a leopard, thou wert german to the lion, and the spots of thy kindred were jurors on thy life: all thy safety were remotion, and thy defence absence. What beast couldst thou be that were not subject to a beast? and what a beast art thou already, that seest not thy loss in transformation!

342

APEM. If thou couldst please me with speaking to me, thou mightst have hit upon it here: the commonwealth of Athens is become a forest of beasts.

TIM. How has the ass broke the wall, that thou art out of the city?

APEM. Yonder comes a poet and a painter: the plague of company light upon thee! I will fear to catch it, and give way: when I know not what else to do, I'll see thee again.

351

332-333 *the unicorn*] a fabulous animal of great ferocity. Its death usually came through the impalement of its single horn on a tree, when charging its natural foe, the lion. Cf. *Jul. Cæs.*, II, i, 204: "*unicorns* may be betray'd with trees."

337 *german to the lion*] brother to the lion, who, suffering no rivalry, was in the habit of slaying all claiming fraternal relationship.

339 *remotion*] seclusion.

348 *Yonder . . . painter*] Thus the First Folio. But the poet and the painter do not appear till the beginning of the next act, — at an interval of some 300 lines. The words are possibly an accidental survival of the first draft of the play by another hand, which Shakespeare revised.

TIM. When there is nothing living but thee, thou shalt be welcome. I had rather be a beggar's dog than Apemantus.

APEM. Thou art the cap of all the fools alive.

TIM. Would thou wert clean enough to spit upon!

APEM. A plague on thee! thou art too bad to curse.

TIM. All villains that do stand by thee are pure.

APEM. There is no leprosy but what thou speak'st.

TIM. If I name thee.

360

I'll beat thee; but I should infect my hands.

APEM. I would my tongue could rot them off!

TIM. Away, thou issue of a mangy dog!

Choler does kill me that thou art alive;

I swoon to see thee.

APEM. Would thou wouldst burst!

TIM. Away, thou tedious rogue! I am sorry I shall lose a stone by thee.

[Throws a stone at him.]

APEM. Beast!

TIM. Slave!

370

APEM. Toad!

TIM. Rogue, rogue, rogue!

I am sick of this false world, and will love nought

But even the mere necessities upon't.

Then, Timon, presently prepare thy grave;

Lie where the light foam of the sea may beat

Thy grave-stone daily: make thine epitaph,

That death in me at others' lives may laugh.

[To the gold] O thou sweet king-killer, and dear divorce

355 *the cap*] the chief.

'Twixt natural son and sire ! thou bright defiler
 Of Hymen's purest bed ! thou valiant Mars !
 Thou ever young, fresh, loved, and delicate wooer,
 Whose blush doth thaw the consecrated snow
 That lies on Dian's lap ! thou visible god,
 That solder'st close impossibilities,
 And makest them kiss ! that speak'st with every tongue,
 To every purpose ! O thou touch of hearts !
 Think thy slave man rebels ; and by thy virtue
 Set them into confounding odds, that beasts
 May have the world in empire !

APEM. Would 't were so! 390
 But not till I am dead. I'll say thou hast gold:
 Thou wilt be throng'd to shortly.

TIM. Throng'd to!

APRM. Ay.

TIM. Thy back, I prithee.

APEM. Live, and love thy misery!

TIM. Long live so, and so die! [*Exit Apemantus.*] I
am quit.

Moe things like men? Eat, Timon, and abhor them.

Enter Banditti

FIRST BAN. Where should he have this gold? It is some poor fragment, some slender ort of his remainder: the mere want of gold, and the falling-from of his friends, drove him into this melancholy.

380 *son and sire*] Rowe's correction of the Folio reading *Sunne and fire*.

387 *touch of hearts*] touchstone of hearts.

395 *Moe*] The Folio reading for *More*. Cf. line 431, *infra*. This line is wrongly given to Apemantus in the Folios.

SEC. BAN. It is noised he hath a mass of treasure. 400

THIRD BAN. Let us make the assay upon him: if he care not for 't, he will supply us easily; if he covetously reserve it, how shall's get it?

SEC. BAN. True; for he bears it not about him; 'tis hid.

FIRST BAN. Is not this he?

BANDITTI. Where?

SEC. BAN. 'T is his description.

THIRD BAN. He; I know him.

BANDITTI. Save thee, Timon.

TIM. Now, thieves? 410

BANDITTI. Soldiers, not thieves.

TIM. Both too; and women's sons.

BANDITTI. We are not thieves, but men that much do want.

TIM. Your greatest want is, you want much of meat. Why should you want? Behold, the earth hath roots; Within this mile break forth a hundred springs; The oaks bear mast, the briers scarlet hips; The bounteous housewife, nature, on each bush Lays her full mess before you. Want! why want?

FIRST BAN. We cannot live on grass, on berries, water, As beasts and birds and fishes. 421

TIM. Nor on the beasts themselves, the birds and fishes;

401 *make the assay upon him*] make trial of him.

414 *meat*] Thus the Folios. The sense is adequate. Hanmer substituted *men*, a quibble implying that the banditti lack manly character, and also want to feed on men, as Timon bids them at line 423, *infra*.

You must eat men. Yet thanks I must you con
 That you are thieves profess'd, that you work not
 In holier shapes: for there is boundless theft
 In limited professions. Rascal thieves,
 Here's gold. Go, suck the subtle blood o' the grape,
 Till the high fever seethe your blood to froth,
 And so 'scape hanging: trust not the physician;
 His antidotes are poison, and he slays
 More than you rob: take wealth and lives together;
 Do villany, do, since you protest to do't,
 Like workmen. I'll example you with thievery:
 The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction
 Robs the vast sea: the moon's an arrant thief,
 And her pale fire she snatches from the sun:
 The sea's a thief, whose liquid surge resolves

430

423 *Yet thanks . . . con*] Yet I must give you thanks, must acknowledge myself grateful. To "con thanks" is a common phrase.

426 *limited*] regulated by law or prescription.

427 *subtle*] deceitful, treacherous.

431 *Moe*] Cf. line 395, *supra*.

432 *villany*] Rowe's correction of *villaine* of the Folios.

protest] promise, vow. Thus the Folios. Theobald needlessly substituted *profess*.

433 *I'll example you with thievery*] I'll give you instances (from nature) authorising your thievery.

437-440 *The sea's a thief . . . excrement*] These lines are an obvious reminiscence of Anacreon's Ode "On the necessity of drinking," (XXI), which was popular in poetry of the French Renaissance, being translated by both Ronsard and Remy Belleau. Ronsard's rendering opens thus (Works, ed. Blanchemain, 1857, II, 286):

"La terre les eaux va boivant,
 L'arbre la boit par sa racine

The moon into salt tears: the earth's a thief,
 That feeds and breeds by a composture stol'n
 From general excrement: each thing's a thief: 440
 The laws, your curb and whip, in their rough power
 Have uncheck'd theft. Love not yourselves; away,
 Rob one another. There's more gold. Cut throats:
 All that you meet are thieves: to Athens go,
 Break open shops; nothing can you steal,
 But thieves do lose it: steal not less for this
 I give you; and gold confound you howsoe'er!
 Amen.

THIRD BAN. Has almost charmed me from my pro-
 fession by persuading me to it. 450

FIRST BAN. 'Tis in the malice of mankind that he
 thus advises us; not to have us thrive in our mystery.

La mer éparse boit le vent,
 Et le soleil boit la marine;
 Le soleil est beu de la lune;
 Tout boit, soit en haut ou en bas."

437-438 *whose liquid surge . . . tears*] This is a poetized account of the moon's responsibility for the tides. The rising of the tidal waves of the sea is presented as the effect of the salt tears shed by the moon. Shakespeare, with an eye to the bond between the moon and the sea, constantly applies the epithet "watery" to the moon. Cf. *Rich. III*, II, ii, 69-70: "That I being govern'd by the *watery moon* May send forth plenteous tears to drown the world." *Wint. Tale*, I, ii, 1: "the *watery star*." *Mids. N. Dr.*, II, i, 162; *Rom. and Jul.*, I, iv, 62: "moonshine's *watery beams*."

439 *composture*] composition, manure.

446 *not less*] Rowe inserted *not*, which the Folios omit by error.

451 *in the malice of mankind*] in or on account of his malignant hate of mankind (not out of any kindness to us).

452 *mystery*] profession, calling.

SEC. BAN. I'll believe him as an enemy, and give over my trade.

FIRST BAN. Let us first see peace in Athens: there is no time so miserable but a man may be true.

[*Exeunt Banditti.*]

Enter FLAVIUS

FLAV. O you gods!
Is yond despised and ruinous man my lord?
Full of decay and failing? O monument,
And wonder of good deeds evilly bestow'd! 460
What an alteration of honour
Has desperate want made!
What viler thing upon the earth than friends
Who can bring noblest minds to basest ends!
How rarely does it meet with this time's guise,
When man was wish'd to love his enemies!
Grant I may ever love, and rather woo
Those that would mischief me than those that do!
Has caught me in his eye: I will present

456 *may be true*] may turn honest.

461 *What an alteration of honour*] What an alteration from a state of honour (to one of disgrace).

465-466 *How rarely . . . enemies !*] How happily or admirably does the injunction to love one's enemies agree with the fashion of the time! The sentiment, which has here an ironical significance, is somewhat anachronistic on pagan lips.

467-468 *Grant I . . . those that do*] Grant that I may ever love and woo those who always profess to mean me mischief rather than those who do me mischief after false professions of kindness. Cf. the proverb very familiar in both France and Spain: "Defend me from my friends; from my enemies I can defend myself."

469 *Has caught*] The pronoun "he" is understood.

My honest grief unto him, and, as my lord, 470
Still serve him with my life. My dearest master!

TIM. Away! what art thou?

FLAV. Have you forgot me, sir?

TIM. Why dost ask that? I have forgot all men;
Then, if thou grant'st thou'rt a man, I have forgot thee.

FLAV. An honest poor servant of yours.

TIM. Then I know thee not:

I never had honest man about me, I; all
I kept were knaves, to serve in meat to villains.

FLAV. The gods are witness,
Ne'er did poor steward wear a truer grief 480
For his undone lord than mine eyes for you.

TIM. What, dost thou weep? come nearer; then I
love thee,

Because thou art a woman, and disclaim'st
Flinty mankind, whose eyes do never give
But thorough lust and laughter. Pity's sleeping:
Strange times, that weep with laughing, not with
weeping!

FLAV. I beg of you to know me, good my lord,
To accept my grief, and whilst this poor wealth lasts
To entertain me as your steward still.

TIM. Had I a steward 490
So true, so just, and now so comfortable?

474 *grant'st*] The Folios read absurdly *grunt'st*.

484-485 *whose eyes . . . sleeping*] whose eyes never flow, never yield to
tears, but through lust and laughter. The emotions of pity are quies-
cent, are inactive.

489 *entertain me*] take me into service, engage me.

491 *so comfortable*] so comforting, so kindly.

SCENE III TIMON OF ATHENS

It almost turns my dangerous nature mild.
 Let me behold thy face. Surely this man
 Was born of woman.

Forgive my general and exceptless rashness,
 You perpetual-sober gods! I do proclaim
 One honest man — mistake me not — but one;
 No more, I pray, — and he's a steward.
 How fain would I have hated all mankind!
 And thou redeem'st thyself: but all, save thee, 500
 I fell with curses.

Methinks thou art more honest now than wise;
 For, by oppressing and betraying me,
 Thou mightst have sooner got another service:
 For many so arrive at second masters,
 Upon their first lord's neck. But tell me true —
 For I must ever doubt, though ne'er so sure —
 Is not thy kindness subtle, covetous,
 If not a usuring kindness and as rich men deal gifts,
 Expecting in return twenty for one? 510

FLAV. No, my most worthy master; in whose breast
 Doubt and suspect, alas, are placed too late:
 You should have fear'd false times when you did
 feast:

492 *It almost turns . . . mild*] Hanmer first substituted *mild* for the Folio reading *wild*, which might well stand. The reading *wild* gives the line the sense "It almost drives mad my nature already exposed by misfortune to the risk of losing its balance." "Turns . . . mild," which would mean "makes gentle," "softens," seems to weaken the significance of the passage.

509 *a usuring kindness*] a usurious, avaricious kindness.

512 *suspect*] suspicion; so again at line 514.

Suspect still comes where an estate is least.
That which I show, heaven knows, is merely love,
Duty and zeal to your unmatched mind,
Care of your food and living; and, believe it,
My most honour'd lord,
For any benefit that points to me,
Either in hope or present, I 'ld exchange 520
For this one wish, that you had power and wealth
To requite me by making rich yourself.

TIM. Look thee, 't is so! Thou singly honest man,
Here, take: the gods, out of my misery,
Have sent thee treasure. Go, live rich and happy;
But thus condition'd: thou shalt build from men,
Hate all, curse all, show charity to none,
But let the famish'd flesh slide from the bone
Ere thou relieve the beggar: give to dogs
What thou deniest to men; let prisons swallow 'em, 530
Debts wither 'em to nothing: be men like blasted woods,
And may diseases lick up their false bloods!
And so farewell, and thrive.

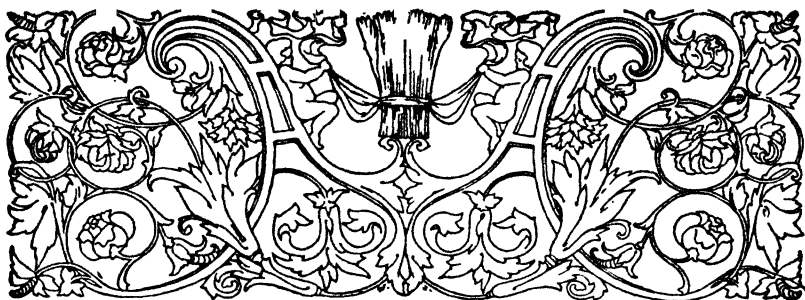
FLAV. O, let me stay
And comfort you, my master.

TIM. If thou hatest curses
Stay not: fly, whilst thou art blest and free:
Ne'er see thou man, and let me ne'er see thee.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

514 *Suspect . . . is least*] Suspicion is always present where wealth and position are at the lowest ebb.

526 *But thus condition'd . . . from men*] But on these conditions, thou shalt build or abide apart from the habitations of mankind.



ACT FIFTH — SCENE I — THE WOODS
BEFORE TIMON'S CAVE,

Enter Poet and Painter; TIMON watching them from his cave

PAINTER



S I TOOK NOTE OF
the place, it cannot be far where
he abides.

POET. What's to be thought of
him? does the rumour hold for
true, that he's so full of gold?

PAIN. Certain: Alcibiades re-
ports it; Phrynia and Timandra
had gold of him: he likewise
enriched poor straggling soldiers
with great quantity: 't is said he
gave unto his steward a mighty
sum.

POET. Then this breaking of his has been but a try
for his friends.

10

1-2 *As I took note . . . abides*] The painter had obviously already dis-
covered Timon's retreat and has learnt of his recent interviews with
Alcibiades, the Banditti and the steward. Cf. lines 5-8, *infra*. Ape-

PAIN. Nothing else: you shall see him a palm in Athens again, and flourish with the highest. Therefore 't is not amiss we tender our loves to him in this supposed distress of his: it will show honestly in us, and is very likely to load our purposes with what they travail for, if it be a just and true report that goes of his having.

POET. What have you now to present unto him?

PAIN. Nothing at this time but my visitation: only I will promise him an excellent piece.

POET. I must serve him so too, tell him of an intent ²⁰ that's coming toward him.

PAIN. Good as the best. Promising is the very air o' the time: it opens the eyes of expectation: performance is ever the duller for his act; and, but in the plainer and simpler kind of people, the deed of saying is quite out of use. To promise is most courtly and fashionable: performance is a kind of will or testament which argues a great sickness in his judgement that makes it.

[*Timon comes from his cave, behind.*]

TIM. [*Aside*] Excellent workman! thou canst not paint a man so bad as is thyself. 30

mantus' remark: "Yonder comes a poet and a painter" (III, iv, 348, *supra*, and note) in no way accounts for their actual arrival on the scene.

11 *a palm*] Cf. *Psalm* xcii, 12: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree."

15 *load our purposes*] fill up, thoroughly fulfil, our purposes; *purses* has been unconvincingly proposed for *purposes*.

16 *his having*] his wealth; so II, ii, 145, *supra*.

24-26 *but in the plainer . . . out of use*] except among the lower orders the performance of one's promise is quite out of fashion.

POET. I am thinking what I shall say I have provided for him: it must be a personating of himself; a satire against the softness of prosperity, with a discovery of the infinite flatteries that follow youth and opulency.

TIM. [*Aside*] Must thou needs stand for a villain in thine own work? wilt thou whip thine own faults in other men? Do so, I have gold for thee.

POET. Nay, let's seek him:
Then do we sin against our own estate,
When we may profit meet, and come too late. 40

PAIN. True;
When the day serves, before black-corner'd night,
Find what thou want'st by free and offer'd light.
Come.

TIM. [*Aside*] I'll meet you at the turn. What a god's gold,
That he is worshipp'd in a baser temple
Than where swine feed!
'T is thou that rigg'st the bark and plough'st the foam,
Settlest admired reverence in a slave:
To thee be worship! and thy saints for aye 50
Be crown'd with plagues, that thee alone obey!
Fit I meet them. [*Coming forward.*]

POET. Hail, worthy Timon!

PAIN. Our late noble master!

32 *a personating of himself*] a presentation of his own case.

42 *black-corner'd night*] night which is obscure as a dark corner or which creates dark corners. Many changes have been suggested for *black-corner'd*, e. g., *black-curtain'd*, *black-colour'd*, but none carries conviction.

45 *at the turn*] as you turn in your walk.

TIM. Have I once lived to see two honest men?

POET. Sir,

Having often of your open bounty tasted,
Hearing you were retired, your friends fall'n off,
Whose thankless natures — O abhorred spirits! —
Not all the whips of heaven are large enough —
What! to you,
Whose star-like nobleness gave life and influence
To their whole being! I am rapt, and cannot cover
The monstrous bulk of this ingratitude
With any size of words.

60

TIM. Let it go naked, men may see't the better:
You that are honest, by being what you are,
Make them best seen and known.

PAIN. He and myself
Have travail'd in the great shower of your gifts,
And sweetly felt it.

TIM. Ay, you are honest men.

PAIN. We are hither come to offer you our service. 70

TIM. Most honest men! Why, how shall I requite you?
Can you eat roots, and drink cold water? no.

BOTH. What we can do, we'll do, to do you service.

TIM. Ye're honest men: ye've heard that I have gold;
I am sure you have: speak truth; ye're honest men.

PAIN. So it is said, my noble lord: but therefore
Came not my friend nor I.

TIM. Good honest men! Thou draw'st a counterfeit

62 *I am rapt*] I am amazed, I am beside myself.

78 *Thou draw'st a counterfeit*] Thou canst paint a portrait. "Counterfeit"
is often seriously used thus. Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, III, ii, 115: "Fair

Best in all Athens: thou'rt indeed the best;
Thou counterfeit'st most lively.

PAIN.

So, so, my lord.

80

TIM. E'en so, sir, as I say. And, for thy fiction,
Why, thy verse swells with stuff so fine and smooth
That thou art even natural in thine art.
But, for all this, my honest-natured friends,
I must needs say you have a little fault:
Marry, 'tis not monstrous in you; neither wish I
You take much pains to mend.

BOTH.

Beseech your honour

To make it known to us.

TIM.

You'll take it ill.

BOTH. Most thankfully, my lord.

TIM.

Will you, indeed?

BOTH. Doubt it not, worthy lord.

90

TIM. There's never a one of you but trusts a knave
That mightily deceives you.

BOTH.

Do we, my lord?

TIM. Ay, and you hear him cog, see him dissemble,
Know his gross patchery, love him, feed him,
Keep in your bosom: yet remain assured
That he's a made-up villain.

Portia's *counterfeit*." But Timon here has an eye to the word's other meaning of "cheat." See line 79, *infra*.

80 *Thou counterfeit'st most lively*] Thou art a thorough imposter.

83 *even natural in thine art*] A poet by nature, with a quibble on "natural" in the sense of "idiot."

93 *cog*] cheat.

94 *patchery*] roguery. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, II, iii, 67: "Such *patchery* . . . and such knavery!"

96 *a made-up villain*] probably, a finished villain.

PAIN. I know none such, my lord.

POET. Nor I.

TIM. Look you, I love you well; I'll give you gold,
Rid me these villains from your companies:
Hang them or stab them, drown them in a draught, 100
Confound them by some course, and come to me,
I'll give you gold enough.

BOTH. Name them, my lord, let's know them.

TIM. You that way, and you this, but two in company:

Each man apart, all single and alone,
Yet an arch-villain keeps him company.
If, where thou art, two villains shall not be,
Come not near him. If thou wouldst not reside
But where one villain is, then him abandon.
Hence, pack! there's gold; you came for gold, ye slaves:
[To Painter] You have work for me, there's payment:
hence! 111

[To Poet] You are an alchemist, make gold of that:
Out, rascal dogs!

[Beats them out, and then retires into his cave.]

100 *in a draught*] in the jakes.

101 *Confound . . . course*] Destroy them by some means.

104-106 *You that way . . . keeps him company*] You go that way and you go this way; then each of you will be two in company, though each of you will be apart and quite alone. Yet an arch-villain (*i. e.*, the evil part of each of yourselves), will be a companion for each of you. Cf. Timon's admonition, line 99, *supra*: "Rid me these villains from your companies."

110 *there's gold*] Timon throws a stone.

111 *You have work for me*] You have to rid yourselves of the villainous vice that goes in your company. Hanmer read *You have work'd for*

SCENE I TIMON OF ATHENS

Enter FLAVIUS and two Senators

FLAV. It is in vain that you would speak with
Timon

For he is set so only to himself
That nothing but himself which looks like man
Is friendly with him.

FIRST SEN. Bring us to his cave:
It is our part and promise to the Athenians
To speak with Timon.

SEC. SEN. At all times alike
Men are not still the same: 't was time and griefs 120
That framed him thus: time, with his fairer hand,
Offering the fortunes of his former days,
The former man may make him. Bring us to
him,
And chance it as it may.

FLAV. Here is his cave.
Peace and content be here! Lord Timon! Timon!
Look out, and speak to friends: the Athenians
By two of their most reverend senate greet thee:
Speak to them, noble Timon.

me and Malone You have done work for me. But no change is absolutely necessary. Neither is it essential to follow the suggestion of the Globe Editors in inserting the stage direction [To Painter] here and [To Poet] in the next line. No such directions appear in any earlier edition. Both remarks are equally applicable to the Poet and to the Painter and are doubtless addressed to them jointly.

114 *Enter Flavius and two Senators]* Many modern editors begin a new scene here.

115 *set so only to himself]* wrapped up so entirely in himself.

TIMON *comes from his cave*

TIM. Thou sun, that comfort'st, burn! Speak, and
be hang'd:

For each true word, a blister! and each false 130
Be as a cauterizing to the root o' the tongue,
Consuming it with speaking!

FIRST SEN. Worthy Timon, —

TIM. Of none but such as you, and you of Timon.

FIRST SEN. The senators of Athens greet thee, Timon.

TIM. I thank them, and would send them back the
plague,

Could I but catch it for them.

FIRST SEN. O, forget

What we are sorry for ourselves in thee.

The senators with one consent of love

Entreat thee back to Athens; who have thought

On special dignities, which vacant lie 140

For thy best use and wearing.

SEC. SEN. They confess

Toward thee forgetfulness too general, gross:

Which now the public body, which doth seldom

129 *comfort'st*] Pope's emendation of the First Folio's *comforts* which
seems the better reading.

131 *cauterizing*] a searing with hot iron. The First Folio read *cantherizing*
which the later Folios misspell *Catherizing*. But the First Folio reading,
though attempts have been made to justify it, seems to be a misprint
suggested by some confused reminiscence of the word *Cantharides*.

138 *one consent*] one united voice, from the Latin "concentus."

142 *too general, gross*] too common, too patent.

143-149 *Which now . . . by the dram*] The grammatical construction is
irregular here. "Which" has no strictly grammatical place in the
sentence and is merely conjunctive, cf. V, ii, 7, *infra*. The mean-

Play the recanter, feeling in itself
 A lack of Timon's aid, hath sense withal
 Of it own fail, restraining aid to Timon;
 And send forth us, to make their sorrowed render,
 Together with a recompense more fruitful
 Than their offence can weigh down by the dram;
 Ay, even such heaps and sums of love and wealth, 150
 As shall to thee blot out what wrongs were theirs,
 And write in thee the figures of their love,
 Ever to read them thine.

TIM. You witch me in it,
 Surprise me to the very brink of tears:
 Lend me a fool's heart and a woman's eyes,
 And I'll bewEEP these comforts, worthy senators.

FIRST SEN. Therefore, so please thee to return with
 us

And of our Athens, thine and ours, to take
 The captainship, thou shalt be met with thanks,
 Allow'd with absolute power, and thy good name 160
 Live with authority: so soon we shall drive back
 Of Alcibiades the approaches wild;
 Who, like a boar too savage, doth root up
 His country's peace.

ing is that, in regard to all that is past, the senate, which seldom
 admits itself in the wrong, feeling conscious of the need of Timon's
 aid, has recognised its own failure or fault in withholding aid from
 Timon; and sends forth, to make their sorrowful submission, to-
 gether with a recompense that shall more than counterpoise their
 offences, though weighed with the most scrupulous exactness.

160 *Allow'd with absolute power*] Privileged with the possession of absolute
 power.

161 *Live with*] Remain invested with.

SEC. SEN. And shakes his threatening sword
Against the walls of Athens.

FIRST SEN. Therefore, Timon, —

TIM. Well, sir, I will; therefore, I will, sir; thus:
If Alcibiades kill my countrymen,
Let Alcibiades know this of Timon,
That Timon cares not. But if he sack fair Athens,
And take our goodly aged men by the beards, 170
Giving our holy virgins to the stain
Of contumelious, beastly, mad-brain'd war;
Then let him know, and tell him Timon speaks it,
In pity of our aged and our youth,
I cannot choose but tell him, that I care not,
And let him take 't at worst; for their knives care not,
While you have throats to answer: for myself,
There 's not a whittle in the unruly camp,
But I do prize it at my love before
The reverend'st throat in Athens. So I leave you 180
To the protection of the prosperous gods,
As thieves to keepers.

FLAV. Stay not; all 's in vain.

TIM. Why, I was writing of my epitaph;
It will be seen to-morrow: my long sickness
Of health and living now begins to mend,
And nothing brings me all things. Go, live still;
Be Alcibiades your plague, you his,
And last so long enough!

178 *a whittle*] a clasp-knife or pocket-knife. The word is still in dialect use.

181 *prosperous gods*] gods who are propitious, who bring prosperity. Cf.

Othello, I, iii, 244: "To my unfolding lend your *prosperous* ear."

184 *my long sickness*] the long disease of life.

FIRST SEN. We speak in vain.

TIM. But yet I love my country, and am not
One that rejoices in the common wreck,
As common bruit doth put it.

190

FIRST SEN. That's well spoke.

TIM. Commend me to my loving countrymen, —

FIRST SEN. These words become your lips as they pass
thorough them.

SEC. SEN. And enter in our ears like great triumphers
In their applauding gates.

TIM. Commend me to them;
And tell them that, to ease them of their griefs,
Their fears of hostile strokes, their aches, losses,
Their pangs of love, with other incident throes
That nature's fragile vessel doth sustain
In life's uncertain voyage, I will some kindness do them :
I'll teach them to prevent wild Alcibiades' wrath. 201

FIRST SEN. I like this well; he will return again.

TIM. I have a tree, which grows here in my close,
That mine own use invites me to cut down,
And shortly must I fell it: tell my friends,
Tell Athens, in the sequence of degree

191 *common bruit*] common rumour.

197 *aches*] a dissyllable. Cf. I, i, 250, *supra*.

198 *incident*] contingent. Cf. "incidency" for "contingency" in *Wint. Tale*, I, ii, 403.

203-210 *I have a tree . . . hang himself*] Plutarch in his *Life of Antony* credits Timon with a speech to this precise effect. Shakespeare follows Plutarch's words very literally here.

206 *in the sequence of degree*] in due order of precedence, from highest to lowest.

From high to low throughout, that whoso please
To stop affliction, let him take his haste,
Come hither ere my tree hath felt the axe,
And hang himself: I pray you, do my greeting. 210

FLAV. Trouble him no further; thus you still shall
find him.

TIM. Come not to me again: but say to Athens,
Timon hath made his everlasting mansion
Upon the beached verge of the salt flood;
Who once a day with his embossed froth
The turbulent surge shall cover: thither come,
And let my grave-stone be your oracle.
Lips, let sour words go by and language end:
What is amiss, plague and infection mend!
Graves only be men's works, and death their gain! 220
Sun, hide thy beams! Timon hath done his reign.

[Retires to his cave.]

FIRST SEN. His discontents are unremoveably
Coupled to nature.

SEC. SEN. Our hope in him is dead: let us return,
And strain what other means is left unto us
In our dear peril.

FIRST SEN. It requires swift foot. *[Exeunt.]*

208 *take his haste*] hasten; the converse of "take his time."

214 *the beached verge . . . flood*] Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, II, i, 85: "the beached margent of the sea."

215 *embossed froth*] swollen surf.

218 *sour*] Rowe's correction of the Folio reading *four*.

225 *strain*] labour at with all energy.

226 *dear*] dire or desperate.

SCENE II — BEFORE THE WALLS OF ATHENS

Enter two Senators and a Messenger

FIRST SEN. Thou hast painfully discover'd: are his
files

As full as thy report?

MESS. I have spoke the least:
Besides, his expedition promises
Present approach.

SEC. SEN. We stand much hazard, if they bring not
Timon.

MESS. I met a courier, one mine ancient friend;
Whom, though in general part we were opposed,
Yet our old love made a particular force,
And made us speak like friends: this man was riding
From Alcibiades to Timon's cave, 10
With letters of entreaty, which imported
His fellowship i' the cause against your city,
In part for his sake moved.

FIRST SEN. Here come our brothers.

1 *Thou hast painfully discover'd*] Thou hast made grievous disclosures.
files] musters, numbers of his army.

7 *Whom*] The relative here is merely conjunctive like "which" in V, i, 143,
supra.

in general part] in the public cause.

8 *made a particular force*] had a private or personal effect, appealed to
our private sentiments. The repetition of *made* in the next line seems
awkward, and has suggested the change here to *had*; "particular"
(i. e., private) is the opposite of "general" (i. e., public) in line 7.

TIMON OF ATHENS

ACT V

Enter Senators from TIMON

THIRD SEN. No talk of Timon, nothing of him expect.
The enemies' drum is heard, and fearful scouring
Doth choke the air with dust: in, and prepare:
Ours is the fall, I fear, our foes the snare. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III — THE WOODS — TIMON'S CAVE, AND A RUDE TOMB SEEN

Enter a Soldier, seeking TIMON

SOLD. By all description this should be the place.
Who's here? speak, ho! No answer! What is this?
Timon is dead, who hath outstretch'd his span:
Some beast read this; there does not live a man.
Dead, sure; and this his grave. What's on this tomb
I cannot read; the character I'll take with wax:

15 *fearful scouring*] the rushing about of terror-stricken fugitives.

3-4 *Timon is dead . . . live a man*] These lines are sometimes regarded as the opening words of an inscription by Timon himself which he has set on the outer wall of the cave, and the soldier is thought to be deciphering them with difficulty. But such an explanation is difficult to reconcile with lines 5-6, where the soldier says he cannot read what is written on the tomb and takes an impression of the writing in wax for his captain to decipher. (See also V, iv, 67-9, *infra*.) Probably the soldier is expressing his own opinion, in view of his failure to get any response to his call, when he says "Timon is dead," while in his remark "some beast read this; there does not live a man" he is peevishly complaining of his inability to read the inscription, which (he thinks) only a beast, and not a man, is likely to interpret. For *read this* Theobald substituted *rear'd this* which is unconvincingly interpreted to mean that as no man is living in the cave some beast must have built up Timon's tomb.

SCENE IV TIMON OF ATHENS

Our captain hath in every figure skill,
An aged interpreter, though young in days:
Before proud Athens he's set down by this,
Whose fall the mark of his ambition is.

[*Exit.* 10

SCENE IV — BEFORE THE WALLS OF ATHENS

Trumpets sound. Enter ALCIBIADES with his powers

ALCIB. Sound to this coward and lascivious town
Our terrible approach. *[A parley sounded.]*

Enter Senators upon the walls

Till now you have gone on and fill'd the time
With all licentious measure, making your wills
The scope of justice; till now myself and such
As slept within the shadow of your power
Have wander'd with our traversed arms and breathed
Our sufferance vainly: now the time is flush,
When crouching marrow in the bearer strong
Cries of itself "No more:" now breathless wrong 10
Shall sit and pant in your great chairs of ease,
And pursy insolence shall break his wind
With fear and horrid flight.

8 aged] veteran, expert.

Sc. III. 10 *mark*] aim, goal.

Sc. IV. 4-5 *making your wills . . . justice*] making your pleasures,
your indulgences, the bound or standard of justice.

7 traversed] submissively folded or crossed.

8 *sufferance*] suffering.

flush] ripe.

9 *crouching marrow*] vigour which is bent down by oppression.

13 *horrid flight*] flight caused by horror or terror.

ACT V

Which nature loathes — take thou the destined tenth,
And by the hazard of the spotted die
Let die the spotted.

FIRST SEN. All have not offended;
For those that were, it is not square to take,
On those that are, revenges: crimes, like lands,
Are not inherited. Then, dear countryman,
Bring in thy ranks, but leave without thy rage:
Spare thy Athenian cradle and those kin
Which, in the bluster of thy wrath, must fall
With those that have offended: like a shepherd
Approach the fold and cull the infected forth,
But kill not all together.

40

SEC. SEN. What thou wilt,
Thou rather shalt enforce it with thy smile
Than hew to't with thy sword.

FIRST SEN. Set but thy foot
Against our rampired gates, and they shall ope;
So thou wilt send thy gentle heart before,
To say thou'lt enter friendly.

SEC. SEN. Throw thy glove,
Or any token of thine honour else,
That thou wilt use the wars as thy redress
And not as our confusion, all thy powers
Shall make their harbour in our town, till we
Have seal'd thy full desire.

50

36 *square*] fair, right.

37 *revenges*] Steevens' emendation of the Folio reading *revenge*. The change improves the metre.

47 *rampired*] "Rampire" is a common form of "rampart."

ACT V

60

ALCIB. Descend, and keep your words.

[The Senators descend, and open the gates.

Enter Soldier

SOLD. My noble general, Timon is dead;
Entomb'd upon the very hem o' the sea;
And on his grave-stone this insculpture, which

55 *Descend*] The First Folio misprints *Defend*. The senators are "on the walls" (see stage direction, l. 2, *supra*). They have been speaking from the balcony at the back of the stage (cf. *Tit. Andr.*, I, i, 1, and note, and *K. John*, II, i, 201 *seq.* *uncharged ports*] unassailed gates.

58 *to atone*] to reconcile.

62 *render'd to your*] Lord Chedworth's emendation of the difficult old readings *remedied to your* in the First Folio and *remedied by your* in the later Folios. "Remedied to" has been explained as "redressed according to." But the sense is rather strained.

63 *At heaviest answer]* To make fullest reparation.

66 *the very hem]* the extreme margin.

With wax I brought away, whose soft impression
Interprets for my poor ignorance.

ALCIB. [*Reads*]

"Here lies a wretched corse, of wretched soul bereft: 70
Seek not my name: a plague consume you wicked caitiffs left!
Here lie I, Timon; who, alive, all living men did hate:
Pass by and curse thy fill; but pass and stay not here thy gait."

These well express in thee thy latter spirits:
Though thou abhorr'dst in us our human griefs,
Scorn'dst our brain's flow and those our droplets which
From niggard nature fall, yet rich conceit
Taught thee to make vast Neptune weep for aye
On thy low grave, on faults forgiven. Dead 80
Is noble Timon: of whose memory
Hereafter more. Bring me into your city,

70-73 *Here lies a wretched corse . . . not here thy gait*] In North's translation of the account of Timon given by Plutarch in his *Life of M. Antonius*, these four lines are found *verbatim*, with the difference that *wretches* there takes the place of *caitiffs* (l. 71), and that each of the two couplets is presented separately as an alternative epitaph on Timon of different authorship. Plutarch assigns the first two lines to Timon himself and the second two lines to the poet Callinachus. The dramatist could only have joined the two couplets together by an hasty oversight. There is no logical connection between them. The second line of the first couplet which bids the reader "Seek not my name," manifestly contradicts the first line of the second couplet which opens with "Here lie I, Timon."

76 *brain's flow*] flow of tears. "Brain" is not uncommonly found in this connection. Cf. Drayton's *Miracles of Moses*, Bk. 3, l. 417: "the fountains of *his brain*."

77 *rich conceit*] a fruitful imagination.

And I will use the olive with my sword,
83 Make war breed peace, make peace stint war, make each
Prescribe to other as each other's leech.
84 Let our drums strike. [Exeunt.

83 *stint*] stop.

84 *leech*] physician.

85 *strike*] strike up, sound. Cf. *Rich. III*, IV, iv, 148: "*strike*
alarums, *drums*," and *Hen. VIII*, I, iv, 108: "Let the music
knock it."

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY SIR SIDNEY LEE
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY J. H. F. BACON

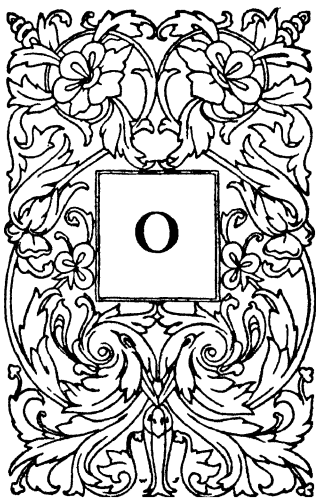
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INTRODUCTION

I



ON 20 May, 1608, when Shakespeare's active professional career was drawing to a close, and he was within eight years of his death, Edward Blount, a London stationer or publisher, obtained a license from the Stationers' Company to publish two works, one entitled "The Booke of Pericles Prince of Tyre," and the other "A Booke called Antony and Cleopatra." The precise significance of these entries in the Stationers' Company Register is open to question. Although Shakespeare's name is not mentioned, it may be assumed that both the "bookes" are the plays similarly entitled which came from Shakespeare's pen. But in neither case have publications

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

of "Pericles" or "Antony and Cleopatra" bearing the date 1608 come to light. Of "Pericles" two editions appeared during the next year 1609, both being published, not by Blount, but by a fellow stationer, Henry Gosson. Of "Antony and Cleopatra" no separate quarto edition is known of that or any later year. The earliest extant copy is in the First Folio collection of Shakespeare's plays, which was issued in 1623. There "The Tragedie of Anthonie and Cleopatra" fills the last place but one in the concluding section of tragedies, the last place being occupied by the romance of "Cymbeline," which has no just place in the tragic category.

In the absence of any printed copy of the tragedy dated in 1608 or thereabouts, doubt is inevitable whether Blount, or any friend in the trade, took practical advantage of the printing license of that year. Yet so many books that are known to have come from the press in Shakespeare's era now either survive in single copies, or have disappeared altogether, that it would be rash, in view of the positive evidence that a quarto edition was contemplated, to deny point-blank its production during Shakespeare's lifetime. The existence of an edition of "Titus Andronicus" of 1594, when a printing license was registered, was long questioned, because every copy had vanished, yet some two years ago an exemplar was unexpectedly discovered in Sweden. The analogy suggests that, in spite of the absence at the moment of any early quarto of "Antony and Cleopatra," the piece may have been published in 1608

INTRODUCTION

or soon after, and it is within the range of possibility that a copy may yet come to light.¹

Internal evidence fully supports the assignment of the play's composition to the year 1608. Definite characteristics of style and metre show that "Antony and Cleopatra" followed the great series of tragedies, "Hamlet," "Othello," "Macbeth," and "King Lear," which are known to have occupied Shakespeare's pen during the six preceding years. In wealth of thought and subtlety of characterisation "Antony and Cleopatra" may perhaps be judged to resemble those tragic masterpieces too closely to support precise conclusions as to narrow differences of date. But the contrast in metre and style between this piece and those five achievements in tragedy is marked enough to exclude the theory that it was undertaken either previously or contemporaneously. After all allowance is made for the strength of family resemblances, the metre and style of "Antony

¹ It is worthy of notice, however, that, when the First Folio was in course of preparation, Edward Blount, who not only held the license of 1608 for the play of "Antony and Cleopatra," but was one of the syndicate of publishers responsible for the Folio, obtained with his partner Isaac (son of William) Jaggard, a license for sixteen pieces by Shakespeare to be included in the great collection, or for "soe manie of the said copies as are not formerly entered to other men" (*i. e.*, not already fully licensed). Fifteenth on this list stands "Anthonie and Cleopatra." The license which Blount had obtained for its publication in 1608 had not been cancelled in the interval, and its repetition in the Stationers' Register for 1623 may be due to inadvertence. But the re-entry suggests that the printers of "Antony and Cleopatra" in the First Folio were unacquainted with a previously printed version, and worked from the theatrical manager's manuscript copy.

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and Cleopatra," when they are compared with the metre and style of the great tragic series, plainly indicate fresh development of faculty and design. The tendency to spasmodic and disjointed effects has become habitual. The verse is less regular than that of "Hamlet" or even "King Lear," although at times the latter play approaches it very closely in metrical irregularity. Similarly the language is more elliptical and allusive. The same verbal and metrical features are only clearly discernible elsewhere in five pieces of Shakespeare's workmanship — in the Shakespearean scenes of "Pericles," which were doubtless undertaken contemporaneously with "Antony and Cleopatra," and in the four plays of "Coriolanus," "A Winter's Tale," "The Tempest," and "Cymbeline." All these five dramas may fairly be reckoned of a later date than the first half of 1608. There is consequently excellent ground for accepting, in agreement with the entry in the Stationers' Register, the early months of 1608 as the period of composition of "Antony and Cleopatra."

II

Coleridge applied to the language of "Antony and Cleopatra" the Latin motto "*feliciter audax*." He credited the dramatic diction with what he finely termed "a happy valiancy." The description could not be bettered. Throughout the piece, the speeches of great and small characters are instinct with figurative allusiveness and metaphorical subtlety, which, however hard to paraphrase or analyse, are signalled

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by both fluency and pertinence, and convey an indelible impression of dignified luxuriance and beauty. A few noble passages must be credited with a rare simplicity. In their moments of supreme exaltation, both Antony and Cleopatra employ language of a directness which is innocent of rhetorical involution. But the tone of sublimity commonly seeks sustenance in unexpected complexities of phrase. The strange turns of subtle expression flow from Shakespeare's pen with a facility which might well tend in less efficient hands to stilted hyperbole. Undoubtedly occasional lines tremble on the verge of the grotesque. But Shakespeare's "angelic strength" preserves him from the peril of bombast, and when he appears to hover on the brink of extravagance, some involuntary diversion of word or thought makes his logical and poetic foothold absolutely secure.

It is superfluous to illustrate from the speeches of the chief characters in the play the soaring pitch which is habitual to the diction. Two figures of speech which come from quite subordinate lips will prove more effectually the pervasiveness of the style peculiar to the play. When Euphronius, the schoolmaster of Cleopatra's children, is suddenly elevated by Antony to the position of his plenipotentiary, the man's astonishment at his promotion finds expression in this glorious figure of speech:—

"I was of late as petty to his ends
As is the morn-dew on the myrtle-leaf
To his grand sea." (III, xii, 8-10.)

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So, too, Enobarbus, when dying a remorseful deserter,
bids the moon

“throw my heart
Against the flint and hardness of my fault;
Which, being dried with grief, will break to powder,
And finish all foul thoughts.” (IV, ix, 15–18.)

So boldly does the dramatist defy the beaten track
alike of imagery and syntax.

The irregularities of the metre are in keeping with the boldness and unexpectedness of the figurative phraseology. The pauses are distributed over the blank-verse lines with lawless variety, and the metrical licenses that Shakespeare allowed himself at earlier stages of his career are altogether exceeded. In far more instances than in any earlier play prepositions or unemphasised pronouns end the line, so that many passages are only preserved from the effects of prose by the poetic force of the enveloping sentiment. One of Antony's latest speeches contains these lines:—

“Thou art sworn, Eros,
That, when the exigent should come, — which now
Is come indeed — when I should see behind me
The inevitable prosecution of
Disgrace and horror, that, on my command,
Thou then wouldst kill me: do 't; the time is come.”
(IV, xiv, 62–67.)

Only the hand of a master in the full tide of its cunning
could venture with impunity on the startling experiments
in prosody which abound in this play.

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III

Like the stirring crisis of Julius Cæsar's death, the story of Antony's love of Cleopatra passed from classical history into the vague floating tradition of medieval Europe. Dante in one line of his "*Divina Commedia*" makes mention of Cleopatra as a heroine of sin; in another place he claims for her destiny the compassion of the world. "*Lussuriosa*" and "*trista*" are the epithets which Dante links with her name. Chaucer more generously assigns her the first place in his "*Ballade of Good Women*," and dwells on her loving fidelity almost to the exclusion of her illicit passion:

"And she hir death receyueth with good chere
For loue of Antony that was hir so dere."

Shakespeare near the outset of his career echoed the indistinct note of medieval legend when he joined Cleopatra with Dido, Helen, Hero, and Thisbe in Mercutio's sportive catalogue of ancient queens of love.

Plutarch's graphic record of Antony's infatuation (in his biography of Antony) first taught Western Europe in the early days of the Renaissance the whole truth about the Queen of Egypt. The Greek biographer established her vogue in modern poetry and drama. Italy and France assimilated the story many years before it reached literary England. Early experiments in the Renaissance drama of both Italy and France

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anticipated Shakespeare in dramatising the historic tragedy of "Antony and Cleopatra," and these efforts long enjoyed an European repute.

The earliest dramatic version of the Plutarchan narrative came from an Italian pen about 1540. The author, Giraldi Cinthio of Ferrara, is best known by that collection of prose tales "Hecatommithi," which supplied Shakespeare with the plots of "Othello" and "Measure for Measure." But in his own country Cinthio acquired equal fame as a dramatist. Shakespeare may have known something of him in that capacity. Giraldi Cinthio based on his novel of "Measure for Measure" a romantic comedy, with which there is reason for believing that Shakespeare had as close an acquaintance as with Cinthio's novel on the same theme. Cinthio's tragedy of Cleopatra opens with the heroine's lamentations over Antony's defeat at the battle of Actium. In succeeding scenes her lover suspects her of playing him false, and she invents a report of her death which, contrary to her design, impels him to suicide. But it is Cleopatra's (not Antony's) fortune which absorbs Giraldi's interest. With the opening of the second act Antony disappears. The four remaining acts portray Cleopatra's unassisted negotiation with the victorious Romans and her final escape by a self-inflicted death from the threatened humiliation of a captive's rôle in a Roman triumph. The unities are carefully respected. The scene throughout is Alexandria. The crises of the action are narrated and are not presented scenically. A chorus of Cleopatra's waiting-women moralise her fate.

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Her monologues breathe a pathetic dignity, but the piece adheres too strictly to the Senecan model to give it much genuine vitality.¹

From Italy, France doubtless derived the impulse to deal dramatically with Cleopatra's fate. No less than three tragedies concerning her were produced in France in the second half of the sixteenth century. All are on Giraldi's classical plan. The monologues attain almost epic dimensions, and the visible action is almost wholly limited to sighs and tears. The topic enjoys the distinction of having inspired the first regular tragedy in French literature. This piece, "Cleopatre Captive," by Estienne Jodelle, was published in 1552. Antony is only represented by his ghost, who rehearses in the first act his relations with Cleopatra and the circumstances of his death. The dramatic interest is confined to the tragic episode of Cleopatra's fall.

Within twenty years of Jodelle's effort the chief dramatist of the French Renaissance, Robert Garnier, handled the theme on new lines. He concentrated his attention on Antony's fortunes, and gave Cleopatra a subsidiary place in the dramatic scheme. The action was restricted to the interval between the battle of Actium and Antony's suicide. Garnier's tragedy is called "Marc Antoine," and ends with the queen's cry of despair on learning of her lover's death. Like Giraldi and Jodelle, Garnier is a faithful disciple of Seneca, and the

¹ Cleopatra's story was familiar to Tasso who in *Gerusalemme Liberata*, 1575 (bk. xx. st. 118), devotes a stanza to her flight from the battle of Actium.

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moral significance of the episode gains in emphasis by his duplication of the chorus. Not only a body of Egyptians, but a troop of Cæsar's soldiers, shrewdly comment on the fatal issue of the story. With scholarly frankness Garnier acknowledges indebtedness not only to Plutarch's "Life of Antony," but to "the fifty-first book of Dion Cassius' history."

Finally the inferior hand of Nicolas de Montreux took up the parable of Cleopatra in 1594. His five-act tragedy of "Cleopatre," alike in construction and plot, closely follows the footsteps of Jodelle's "Cleopatre Captive."¹

It was such French efforts which gave the cue to the dramatic versions of Cleopatra's history in Elizabethan England, which preceded Shakespeare's work. The earliest of these English experiments was a translation of Garnier's tragedy. This came from the accomplished pen of Sir Philip Sidney's sister, Mary, Countess of Pembroke. It was published in 1592, when Shakespeare had just established his fame with his tragedy of purer love—"Romeo and Juliet." Although the poet Daniel praises the facility of the countess, who proved for him a generous patroness, her rendering of the French drama leaves an impression of stilted and

¹ It is irrelevant to the present survey to pursue the Cleopatra chain of French tragedy through the numerous links of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (see pp. xlix and l, *infra*). But it may be noted that there came from the Paris press in 1578—midway between Garnier's and Montreux's activities—a narrative poem of amorous warmth entitled "Delicieuses amours de Marc Antoine et Cleopatre," by Guillaume Belliard of Blois.

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grotesque formality which does injustice to the simplicity of Garnier's classical French. Two years later, by way of sequel to the countess' work, her protégé Daniel issued an original tragedy of "Cleopatra," which carried the tale from Antony's suicide to Cleopatra's. Although no mere translator, the English poet is loyal to French guidance and to the Senecan pattern. Literary facility is apparent in all Daniel's verse, and if dramatic feeling be lacking, his play shows poetic conception of his heroine's impassioned temperament. Nor was Daniel willing to drop the topic with the completion of his "Cleopatra." He pursued it some five years later in an imaginary verse-letter from Antony's wife Octavia to her husband; there the Egyptian enchantress is a very shadowy figure of maleficence. A humble camp follower of the Elizabethan army of poets and dramatists, one Samuel Brandon, emulated Daniel's example, and contrived, in 1598, to shift to Octavia the dramatic interest of Antony and Cleopatra's story in "The tragi-comedie of the virtuous Octavia." Brandon's catastrophe is the death of Mark Antony, and Octavia's jealousy of Cleopatra is the main theme. To this piece Brandon appended in the published volume a poetic correspondence on the Ovidian pattern between his heroine and her husband. Modest as is the value of Brandon's efforts, they testify to the variety of aspect which the historic facts offer the dramatic craftsman.

There are touches in all this pre-Shakespearean literature of Antony and Cleopatra which faintly suggests

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Shakespeare's design. Daniel's stiff pen seems to adumbrate fragments of Shakespeare's language. But Plutarch is the universal inspirer, and most of the resemblances between the "Antony and Cleopatra" of Shakespeare and the like efforts of his predecessors may all be accidental coincidences due to the general dependence on Plutarch's expansive treasury of fact and observation. The interest of the cognate work of earlier pens does not reside in Shakespeare's direct indebtedness. The main thing to note is that Italians, Frenchmen, and Englishmen anticipated Shakespeare in discovering the adaptability of Cleopatra's story to purposes of high tragedy. In his choice of the topic, he was a conscious imitator. The circumstance offers one more example of Shakespeare's tendency to follow the path to which others pointed the way, and his eagerness to identify himself with the contemporary trend of taste and sentiment. But in his "Antony and Cleopatra," if anywhere, he proved the well-worn theme to be an Ulysses' bow which none but he could bend to true effect.

For one thing, the plan which all his predecessors followed was distinguished by a simplicity which was foreign to his complex conception of drama. They drew a sharp distinction between the queen's fate and that of her paramour. Her experience appealed to the sixteenth-century pioneers with a force which that of Antony failed to command. Most of the earlier playwrights exclude Antony altogether from their "dramatis personæ," and concentrate their vision on

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Cleopatra's sufferings after he has passed away. On the other hand the single piece (by Garnier) which deals at all exhaustively with Antony's fortune is content to draw the curtain with his death and to take leave of a living Cleopatra. Of the many crucial differences in workmanship between Shakespeare and his predecessors, the most palpable and not the least suggestive is the evenness with which Shakespeare divides his energies between hero and heroine, and the completeness with which he unifies the twofold tragedy.

IV

On North's spirited translation of Plutarch's *Lives* Shakespeare based his great Roman trilogy of "Julius Cæsar," "Antony and Cleopatra," and "Coriolanus." Not merely does he depend in all the three pieces on Plutarch for his facts, but he accepts North's phraseology wherever it can be made to serve his dramatic purpose. All the poet's historical knowledge of Antony's fatal entanglement in Cleopatra's toils comes from Plutarch's "Life of Antony." The subtly stirring topic would seem to have matured in his mind slowly. On the opening section of Plutarch's biography of Antony he had levied heavy loans six years before in "Julius Cæsar." From a later page of the memoir he introduced into the more recent tragedy of "Macbeth" a pointed reference to Antony's ill-omened rivalry with

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Octavius Cæsar,¹ and on a digression in Plutarch's text he based his lurid sketch of the misanthropy of Timon of Athens. However rapid his methods of final execution, a close preliminary study of his authority brought him to that "brighter heaven of invention" in which was forged his ultimate conception of Antony and Cleopatra.

Marked as is the contrast in tone and temper between the tragedy of "Julius Cæsar" and that of "Antony and Cleopatra," historic links bind the two pieces closely together. Barely a page of Plutarch intervenes between Antony's order for the honourable burial of Brutus on the battlefield at Philippi, with which "Julius Cæsar" closes, and the victor's first acquaintance with the Egyptian siren Cleopatra, with which "Antony and Cleopatra" opens. Many episodes of Philippi are recalled in the second drama. Cleopatra in a playful mood girds herself with her lover's "sword Philippan." In the crisis of his fate the thoughts of Antony and his companions turn involuntarily to his past triumph over "mad Brutus" and "pale Cassius," and the irony of

¹ In "Macbeth," III, i, 54-57, the Scottish king justifies his fear of Banquo by quoting the soothsayer's warning to Antony (as reported by Plutarch) of Octavius Cæsar's fated triumph. Macbeth is afraid that Banquo will overcome him as Octavius Cæsar overcame Mark Antony. His "genius" or daimon is (he believes) controlled by the "genius" or daimon of Banquo:

"There is none but he
Whose being I do fear; and under him
My genius is rebuked, as it is said
Mark Antony's was by Cæsar."

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his final fortune is accentuated by the reminiscence. "Antony and Cleopatra" is well entitled to rank as the epic sequel of Shakespeare's first endeavour in the dramatisation of Roman history.

Shakespeare loyally follows for the most part the lines of Plutarch's biography. No incident can he be said to invent. With the self-confidence of genius, he neglects no phrase nor hint of Plutarch which has left its impress on his memory. Many trifling details, which bring Cleopatra's idiosyncrasy into relief, come unaltered from the Greek author: how she loves to wander through the streets at night, and note "the qualities of people"; how in a spirit of bravado she hops forty paces in the public highway; how when she resolves on death she pursues "conclusions infinite of easy ways to die." All the extravagant revelry of the Egyptian court is borrowed without modification. The superb description of the barge in which the Queen journeys down the river Cydnus to meet Antony is Plutarch's language. The supernatural touches, which complicate the tragic motive, are not original. It is Plutarch's soothsayer who warns Antony that his genius or daimon is under the sway of Octavius. Antony's soldiers hear in Plutarch as in the play mysterious music, which they interpret as a sign that the god Hercules, who had hitherto protected their general, was now bidding him farewell.

At times, even in the heat of the tragedy, the speeches of the hero and heroine and of their attendants are transferred bodily from North's prose. Two illustrations of

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the dramatist's bold fidelity are characteristic. In both the play and the biography, Antony in his dying moments calls for wine, and bids Cleopatra seek safety of Cæsar, but trust none about Cæsar but Proculeius. Plutarch continues his narrative thus: "And for himself, that she should not lament nor sorrowe for the miserable chaunge of his fortune at the end of his dayes: but rather that she should thinke him the more fortunate, for the former triumphe and honors he had received considèring that while he lived he was the noblest and greatest prince of the world, and that now he was overcome not cowardly, but valiantly, a Romane by another Romane." Shakespeare's words in the same situation run:

The miserable change now at my end
Lament nor sorrow at; but please your thoughts
In feeding them with those my former fortunes
Wherein I lived, the greatest prince o' the world,
The noblest, and do now not basely die,
Not cowardly put off my helmet to
My countryman, a Roman by a Roman
Valiantly vanquish'd. (IV, xv, 51-58.)

At a later stage of the drama, Cæsar's soldiers break into Cleopatra's place of refuge to find her dead, and they warmly rebuke her faithful handmaiden Charmian, who is dying at her mistress' side. What follows is reported by Plutarch thus: "One of the soldiers seeing her, angrily said unto her: 'Is that well done, Charmian?' 'Very well,' said she again, 'and meet

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for a princess descended from the race of so many noble kings.' She said no more, but fell down hard by the bed."

Shakespeare paraphrases the passage in these lines:

FIRST GUARD. What work is here! Charmian, is this well done?

CHARMIAN. It is well done, and fitting for a princess

Descended of so many royal kings.

Ah, soldier!

[*Dies.*

(V, ji, 323-326.)

The extent to which the dramatist saturated himself with Plutarchan detail may be gauged by the circumstance that he christens an attendant at Cleopatra's court with the name of Lamprius (I, ii, 1 Stage Direction). The nomenclature only becomes intelligible when we learn that Plutarch's grandfather of similar name (Lampryas) is parenthetically cited by the biographer as hearsay authority for some backstairs gossip of the palace at Alexandria.

Not that Shakespeare accepts the whole of the episode which Plutarch narrates. Although he adds nothing he makes substantial omissions, and it must be admitted that his method of selection does not always respect the calls of perspicuity. Eleven years (41 B. C.—30 B. C.) intervened in history between the first meeting of Antony and Cleopatra, and the disasters that overtake them at and after the battle of Actium. It is foreign to Shakespeare's purpose to offer a complete picture of the period. Substantially he confines himself to the first year and the last. He frankly blots out of the centre of the story

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nine or ten years of Antony's career. That period is crowded with events of political, military, and personal importance. Antony's arrival in his seat of government at Athens, in the company of his wife Octavia, is followed in the play, without break, by his final return to Cleopatra's palace at Alexandria and by that rupture with Octavius Cæsar, which issues in the battle of Actium. Shakespeare ignores the nine years' interval during which Antony, having negotiated with Octavius at Rome the reconstitution of the triumvirate, conducted a prolonged war in Parthia and Armenia. There at the head of a "great and puissant army" of 115,000 men, "made all Asia to tremble." Antony's private life during the same period is excluded from Shakespeare's canvas: how, in the course of eight years of conjugal calm, Octavia bore him two daughters; how a quarrel then led to a formal divorce in Rome, and how Antony, on being finally released from matrimonial ties, resumed openly guilty relations with Cleopatra after a prolonged interruption. Nor does Shakespeare take cognisance of the eight or nine months which separate Antony's defeat at Actium from his rout under the walls of Alexandria. During that interval, which the play leaves out of account, Antony, according to Plutarch, lived in retirement on an uninhabited island off the Greek coast where he emulated the misanthropic eccentricities of Timon of Athens. With that episode Shakespeare proved himself familiar in his play of "Timon of Athens."

Thus deliberately does Shakespeare cut adrift a com-

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plex series of events. The excision is inevitable for the adequate reason from the dramatic point of view that no portion of the omitted details directly concern his heroine Cleopatra. At the same time the neglected incident leaves in his play many jagged edges which impair the general coherence and symmetry. There is evidence that the dramatist abandons Plutarch's guidance with hesitation and on no deliberate plan. He makes hurried and fragmentary allusion to Plutarchan episode with which he deals either very perfunctorily or not at all. Irrelevance must be laid to his charge when, at the opening of the third act, he shifts without warning the scene from Pompey's galley off Misenum to a plain in Syria, and makes Antony's officer Ventidius, while celebrating the defeat of the Parthians, excuse himself from pursuing his advantage for fear of exciting Antony's jealousy. The innuendo, which is intelligible in Plutarch's expansive context, conflicts with the chivalric tenour of Antony's generalship, which goes unquestioned elsewhere in the play. Shakespeare has nothing to tell us of Antony's personal interposition in the Parthian campaign save the baldest mention of his brave indifference to "Parthian darts." Elsewhere Shakespeare pursues his master along other superfluous lines to no greater purpose. The feast of the triumvirs on board Pompey's galley off Misenum gives Shakespeare a welcome opportunity of illustrating his original faculty of humour, and he develops to rare effect Plutarch's bare hint that the rival statesmen "made great cheer" and "fell to be merry with Antonius' love with Cleo-

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patra.” But Pompey and his pirates have no just tie with the main thread of the dramatic action. Shakespeare fails to explain the hollowness of the convivial reconciliation, and a casual or parenthetical reference to Pompey’s subsequent defection and ruin is a lame epilogue to this diversion. In an inevitable correspondence with the digressive tendency of the middle currents of the piece is the constant oscillation of scene from one distant part of the world to another. The primary issues justify migrations between Alexandria and Rome, and between Athens and Actium (off the coast of Epirus); but the topography is unduly embarrassed when we journey from Rome to Misenum or to Syria for the sake of incident which lacks relevance to the central threads.

Defects as well as merits must be admitted in the dramatist’s employment of Plutarch’s narrative, yet in any final estimate of the play Shakespeare’s relations with Plutarch acquire a very secondary significance. It is Shakespeare’s own dramatic and poetic instinct which gives the tragedy its value in literature. The dramatist’s mind is concentrated on the infatuation of Antony and Cleopatra and with magnificent freedom and originality he expands and develops Plutarch’s presentation of the impassioned intrigue. He sets his own independent valuation on most of the amorous incident which he assimilates. The converse of the lovers owes little to Plutarch, and elsewhere he strikes many a new note, of which the Greek writer is incapable. The varied scenes between Cleopatra and her handmaidens strike a key

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which is foreign to Plutarch's spirit. All the humorous episode stands on the same footing. Plutarch gives no suggestion of Enobarbus' ironical humour, nor of the Aristophanic revelry which seals the peace between Sextus Pompeius and the triumvirs, nor of the comic loquacity of the country bumpkin, from whose hands Cleopatra receives the deadly asp. By such embellishments Shakespeare broadens the dramatic tone without striking any jarring note. It was not Plutarch's tuition which endowed him with that magical gift of humour whereby he reconciled art with life.

High as is the level of interest that is maintained through Plutarch's *Life of Antony*, it is Shakespeare's glory to have lifted the whole scheme of the story to a new elevation and to have invested it with a vivid splendour of action and diction, which leaves Plutarch's page by comparison tame and lifeless. The leading events and characters, which Shakespeare drew from North's English rendering of the Greek biography, are, despite his liberal borrowings of phrase and fact, re-incarnated in the crucible of the poet's imagination, so that they glow in his verse with a heroic and poetic glamour of which Plutarch gives faint conception. It is beyond the capacity of Plutarch's simple prose to convey that imperial sense of spaciousness which moves the Shakespearean arena. "Realms and islands" are involuntarily acknowledged to be fit counters in the games of this scenic world. "Kingdoms and provinces" are recognised to be "kissed away" by right of nature. The hero and heroine seem created to bestride oceans, to

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make their sons “kings of kings,” and to have kings for their servitors. Yet such is the dramatist’s mastery of his art that without evoking any glimmer of incongruity he contrives that his expansive setting of an heroic age should frame a human story of elemental passion, which owes its triumph to its fidelity to nature. The poignancy of the tragic pathos gains much and loses nothing from the magnificence of the environment. The play is the most stirring of all the chapters in Shakespeare’s largely designed history of the human heart.

V

In spite of grave defects of construction — of the puzzling oscillation of the scene through the middle portion of the play, and the abrupt interpolation of barely relevant incident — the tragic intensity, which colours the main thread, gives the drama essential unity. The main path is clear of entanglement. All the scenes which Antony and Cleopatra dominate show Shakespeare’s mastery of dramatic emotion at its height, and render the piece, for all the ambiguities and distractions of subsidiary scenes, a triumph of perfect art.

The keynote is struck with exceptional dramatic vigour in the opening speech of the play when Antony’s friend and follower Philo describes in masterly phrase “this dotage of our general’s.” No drama, in the range of Shakespeare’s work, has a more imposing prologue. Without delay there enters the general Antony — “the triple pillar of the world” — in the embraces

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of Cleopatra his royal temptress, "his serpent of old Nile." In four lines they express their measureless love. With Cleopatra's opening words to Antony in this brief dialogue: "If it be love indeed, tell me how much," the spectator or reader is plunged into the full tide of the passionate flood, and until the final catastrophe is reached there is no flagging of his interest in the dramatist's exposition of the protagonists' destiny.

It is in his portrait of Cleopatra that Shakespeare's varied powers show themselves in the play to fullest effect. Graphic as is the portrait of Antony, it is of less versatile interest, and there are a few signs of inconsistency in its development. Although Shakespeare exhibited a gigantic strength elsewhere, it is doubtful if any of his creations, male or female, deserve a rank in his great gallery higher than that of his queen of Egypt for artistic completeness of conception or sureness of touch in dramatic execution. "She is a wonderful piece of work" whom "age cannot stale."

Chaste women may resent the common verdict that Cleopatra finally embodies the quintessence of the feminine temperament, that she is, in the vulgarised phrase of philosophy, "the eternal feminine." She is a courtesan of oriental voluptuousness, albeit a courtesan of genius. She ministered to the pleasures of Julius Cæsar and Cneius Pompeius, before she met Antony and atoned for her frailties by a devotion entailing death. The sexual instinct has moulded her life. "Though you can guess," Antony tells her, "what temperance

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should be, you know not what it is." She is "with Phœbus' amorous pinches black, and wrinkled deep in time." It is doubtful whether any real value attaches to the penitent note which escapes her in moments of depression. There is a hollow sound in her plea that she is

"e'en a woman, and commanded
By such poor passion as the maid that milks
And does the meanest chares." (IV, xv, 73-75.)

Sincerity seems lacking to her confession :

"I have
Been laden with like frailties which before
Have often shamed our sex." (V. ii, 121-123.)

A truer key might be detected in her despairing exclamation "My desolation does begin to make a better life," but the words form the exordium of a vow, not of reformation, but of suicide. She is in fact to the last proud of all her past conquests. The reminiscence of her girlish triumph over "broad-fronted Cæsar" and "great Pompey" stirs in her to the end a spirit of exultation. In the presence of death she cannot free herself of the thought of passion. When her handmaiden Iras falls dead at her feet before the fatal poison has done its work upon herself, there is an equivocal significance in the regretful accents with which she conjures up a picture of Iras' arrival in heaven before her:—

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“If she first meet the curled Antony,
He ’ll make demand of her, and spend that kiss
Which is my heaven to have.” (V, ii, 299-301.)

So long as the breath is in her body, the fleshly impulse can never be wholly quiescent.

Yet without extenuating Cleopatra’s frailties, or identifying her sex with all of them, it is difficult to deny that her “infinite variety” reflects on an expansive canvas almost every phase of the feminine spirit save that cast in the virginal or conventual mould. Cleopatra’s characteristics may rarely be all present together, at any rate in the same degree of intensity. But few women can be truly judged to be strangers to the whole category. Cleopatra is the sport of sensation. Self-repression or self-control is difficult for her. She cannot restrain spasmodic outbreaks of ill-temper. Tears follow laughter involuntarily. Displeasure or anger slackens her bodily faculty. She faints with nervous facility. Her fears in critical situations, however fleeting, are incapable of concealment.

At the same time she is insatiably curious, incurably frivolous and playful. Her love of pleasure and her frank delight in amusement or social diversion are seasoned by keen enjoyment of a crude practical joke. Her yearning for admiration impels her to such eccentric feats as hopping forty paces in the public street. Her self-indulgence tends to ostentation, but it is coloured by an æsthetic sense, an artistic temperament. The rich habiliment which is needful to her

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happiness must be tasteful. The luxury of beautiful art pervades her palace. On the approach of death she arrays herself in her crown "and best attires." Her instinctive dread of squalor and of squalid company is prominent among the incentives to suicide.

It is inevitable that womanliness of Cleopatra's type should exert supreme power of allurements over men, and her dominant aim in normal life is to give her fascination free scope for activity. Capable of almost every mood she is to men irresistible in them all. "Everything becomes" her, — "to chide, to laugh, to weep; every passion fully strives in" her "to make itself admir'd." Her caprices exercise a witch's spell and she is fully aware of their potency. She is "cunning past man's thought," and she modulates her coqueties to enforce her magnetic attractions. Laughter is always at her command. She can laugh her lover out of patience, and then laugh him into patience. But she can be grave on occasion, and her gravity can work more mischief than her levity. Mere submissiveness has small place in her armoury. She recognises that such favours as she has to bestow are valued at a higher rate when they are delayed. She has no faith in the virtue of a coming-on disposition. Cleopatra is a mistress of the derisive or contradictory method of solicitation. If her lover be sad she dances; if he be mirthful she suddenly falls sick. To her handmaiden's counsel to cross Antony in nothing she quickly retorts: "Thou teachest like a fool; the way to lose him." When her lover next joins her, she lets loose

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upon him all her power of biting raillery. But she is nothing if not variable, and before the scene closes she is showering upon Antony the tenderest sympathy and admiration. Whether she rage or caress, her charm preserves its magic and works the same conquest.

The tragic crisis of Cleopatra's fate brings into relief other capacities than those of ensnaring the hearts of men by coquetry and caprice. Her nature is never wholly selfish. She is always tender and generous to her handmaidens. Finally, when she realises the overmastering force of love, which her wiles evoke in Antony, she braces her energies to make an adequate requital. In the ruin of her fortunes she admits the impulse to save herself by exerting her old blandishments on the conqueror of her lover and herself. But she quickly abandons the design of self-interest, and with an earnestness and a courage which seem new to her resolves to share her lover's fate. In the light of her past, her motives must always be subject to some suspicion, and it may be open to question whether her grief for the death of Antony be a stronger inducement to her heroic suicide than the threatened humiliation of figuring in Octavius Cæsar's triumph at Rome. But the fine feeling which impregnates all her closing utterances entitles her to the benefit of the doubt. Her nature betrays all its versatility in her last moments. Her love of ostentation requires that she should die in royal robes with the crown on her head. Her playfulness is not exhausted. She trifles with the rustic who brings her the asp which is the instrument of her de-

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struction. Even when the deadly worm is drinking her life-blood, and consciousness is fading, she whispers with a jesting pathos:—

“Dost thou not see the baby at my breast
That sucks the nurse asleep?” (V, ii, 307-308.)

Her houri-like fascination is, indeed, almost a match for death itself. As Octavius Cæsar views her dead body, he pronounces the only elegy that might appear possible:

“She looks like sleep,
As she would catch another Antony
In her strong toil of grace.” (V, ii, 343-345.)

But although Cleopatra is of the earth, at the end she shows herself far from earthy. The unimaginative peasant is moved at sight of her in her adversity to exclaim that “a woman is a dish for the gods.” Her “passions” seem ultimately sublimated into “the finest parts of pure love.” There is nothing common or unclean in her challenge of death. She meets her doom with the cry:

“Husband, I come:
Now to that name my courage prove my title!
I am fire and air; my other elements
I give to baser life.” (V, ii, 285-288.)

It is almost adequate comment on Antony's character to affirm that he is a worthy companion of Cleopatra. The dramatic and poetic feeling, with which his portrait is instinct, only falls below that of his paramour in the occasional introduction of some slight irrelevance

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of detail. Shakespeare's dependence on Plutarch led him to identify Antony with one or two episodes which seem to harmonise imperfectly with the main dramatic intention.

There attaches to Shakespeare's Antony in the eye of the Shakespearean student one interest to which his Cleopatra has no claim. The conception of his personality continues a previous study of his moral development. Shakespeare has already depicted Antony at an earlier stage of his career. Antony fills a prominent part in Shakespeare's first Roman play of "Julius Cæsar." There he figures as a young man, loving sport and frivolity, in whom the shock of a great catastrophe evokes unsuspected ability, energy, and resourcefulness. Under the stress of the sudden crisis of Julius Cæsar's assassination, Antony becomes a great orator and an astute statesman. The development, too, of more personally attractive characteristics is stimulated by the stir of the mighty events. A sincere devotion to his patron, the assassinated dictator, is combined with a magnanimous bearing to the men who committed the murder in the name of liberty and met ruin in battle at Antony's hand. Antony, as Shakespeare painted him in youth, has some affinity with Prince Hal, whose love of wild frolic and low company, whose addiction to riots, banquets, and practical joking yielded to the touch of responsibility. But the contrast is more significant than the resemblance. The moral revolution worked in Prince Hal by his accession to royal power proved permanent. There was no backsliding. Once for all,

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“Consideration, like an angel came,
And whipped the offending Adam out of him.”

In Antony's case the influence of the “offending Adam” was only temporarily stayed. Subsequent circumstance impelled new and more perilous activities of vicious propensities. In “Antony and Cleopatra,” Antony's lower nature triumphs over his better instincts, and although his sin takes a heroic colour and moves pity rather than blame, he treads from the first the path of degeneracy with a boldness which gives slender hope of rehabilitation.

Antony loses the world for love. A soldier and a politician of high capacity, he has won in the interval between the period of the two plays every material reward of political or military ambition. A third part of the world is under his sway. Yet his triumphs have not engendered undue vanity or self-conceit. His worldly success has brought with it no haughtiness of demeanour nor overweening pride. He remains to the end through all the steps of his elevation a generous master to those who serve him loyally. In the field he shares with his men all campaigning hardships. The evidence, which Plutarch advances, of Antony's cruel treatment of his foes is ignored by Shakespeare, and there is a consequent inconsistency in the dramatist's appropriation from Plutarch's pages of the complaint of Antony's lieutenant Ventidius that his general is jealous of his subordinate's military victories. Everywhere else in the play a rare magnanimity distinguishes Antony's

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relations with his officers and men. Of a naturally convivial temperament, he enjoys social entertainment and can on occasion drink deep. His tastes, indeed, show no great refinement. Even in his imperial station he will at times indulge an original predilection for low, roistering company. But there is in Antony's moral constitution another defect which age and great position are destined to intensify. He has always been, in more than the average degree, susceptible to the charms of women. He is "our courteous Antony whom ne'er the word of 'no' woman heard speak." His matrimonial experiences were unfortunate. His first wife, "the shrill-tongued Fulvia," refused to identify herself with his interests, and engaged in factious political intrigue which embarrassed his public life. With chivalric generosity he recognised in her "a great spirit." But his joyless domestic experience was calculated to accentuate the sensual flaw. His second marriage with the placid Octavia was a mere move in the political game. His treatment of her is not lacking in characteristic courtesy. But before his union with her he had passed under Cleopatra's spell, and no call of duty, even in the absence of his enchantress, could liberate him from her toils.

Antony's infatuation for Cleopatra began when he was well advanced in middle age. He was over fifty when his passion reached its height. His head was grizzled and his brown hair was streaked with gray. The pre-eminent skill which Shakespeare brought to his portrayal of Cleopatra lends conviction to the com-

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pleteness of the sway which she exercises over her elderly lover. Antony abandons himself to her witchery with a desperate sincerity. Every object and every obligation which were unconcerned with Cleopatra pass from his range of vision. His whole nature is subdued to the delicious poison of her love. In her embraces he exclaims with perverse exaltation:

“Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch
Of the ranged empire fall! Here is my space.
Kingdoms are clay: our dungy earth alike
Feeds beast as man: the nobleness of life
Is to do thus; when such a mutual pair
And such a twain can do't, in which I bind,
On pain of punishment, the world to weet
We stand up peerless.” (I, i, 33-40.)

In his lucid intervals his conscience warns him:

“These strong Egyptian fetters I must break,
Or lose myself in dotage.” (I, ii, 113-114.)

For a moment he seeks escape from the Egyptian snare. By a mighty effort he obeys Octavius Cæsar's summons to Rome and makes a despairing endeavour to play his just part in the affairs of the world, of which he is still “the triple pillar.” But the link with Cleopatra is indissoluble. A separation only serves to fan the flame of his passion. He returns to her side and finds his bondage more enthralling than before.

Flashes of Antony's martial spirit illumine the progress of his ruin. Recollections of his early prowess

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momentarily renew his courage, and sear his mind with the thought of his "most unnoble swerving." His impetuous challenge of Octavius Cæsar to single combat shows that his faith in his swordsmanship is still alive. But there is no redemption for him when, weakly permitting Cleopatra to accompany him to the battle of Actium, he follows in the track of her vessel when she flies from the enemy in panic fear. Passion has rendered him effeminate; he has tied his heart to her rudder by strings, which he cannot break. She exerts on his spirit so absolute a supremacy that her "beck might from the bidding of the gods command" him. One tear from her eye in acknowledgment of his reproof repays him for all he has lost.

Thus Antony moves onward to his relentless destiny. No torturing humiliation is spared him. Under the growing strain of accumulated disaster he mistakes an innocent exchange of courtesies between Cleopatra and Octavius' messenger for a declaration of affection. Then jealous anger encourages the belief, which Cleopatra goes a little way to justify, that she for whom he has yielded his reputation is a traitor. The stress of the new emotion robs him of the last shreds of self-respect. But before the inevitable end is reached, a false report of Cleopatra's death rekindles the heat of his passion. Life without Cleopatra becomes unthinkable. His spirit sinks past recovery, and he falls upon his sword. Even in his attempt at suicide an adverse fate pursues him. His wound does not prove fatal immediately, but death's postponement gives him the

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opportunity of a final reconciliation with his love, of which the dramatist takes marvellous advantage.

It is observable that the notes of roughness and sensuality in Antony's temper are ultimately mellowed by a vein of poetry, which lends a singular beauty to all his farewell utterances. Herein he resembles Shakespeare's Richard II and Macbeth, in both of whom a poetic temperament is quickened by despair. The great dialogue in which Antony takes leave of his faithful servant Eros abounds in delicate imagery, touched by the truest emotion. Each speech of Antony seems in this scene to take a finer poetic hue than the one that preceded it, and the utterances form as a whole a graduated crescendo of poetic splendour. The great simile drawn from the shifting shapes of clouds, "black vesper's pageants" would appear unsurpassable until we reach the glorious deliverance which begins

"Unarm, Eros; the long day's task is done,
And we must sleep." (IV, xiv, 35-36.)

That outburst ends with the lines

"Eros! — I come, my queen. Eros! — Stay for me:
Where souls do couch on flowers, we'll hand in hand,
And with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze:
Dido and her Aeneas shall want troops,
And all the haunt be ours." (IV, xiv, 50-54.)

Yet even the poetic sensibility of this poignant pathos seems excelled a few lines below in Antony's cry

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“I will be
A bridegroom in my death, and run into ’t
As to a lover’s bed.” (IV, xiv, 99–101.)

Antony’s dying spirit of resignation silences all censure, and extorts assent to the charitable verdict which is pronounced on his chequered life by Mæcenás and Agrippa :

MÆCENAS.	“His taints and honours Waged equal with him.
AGRIPPA.	A rarer spirit never Did steer humanity : but you, gods, will give us Some faults to make us men.” (V, i, 30–33.)

VI

Though it is only on the characters of Antony and Cleopatra that Shakespeare has bestowed the full measure of his power, there are few in the great crowd of the “*dramatis personæ*” who have not caught something of the spacious humanity with which the whole scheme of the tragedy thrills. Charmian and Iras, the queen’s attendants, mingle frivolity and fidelity with a realism which gives them a breathing individuality ; they speak, albeit in a minor key, their mistress’s magic language. Charmian and Iras have a fit counterpart in Antony’s faithful servant Eros, whose speech comes direct from the heart. The same note of vigorous emotion is sounded with appropriate modulation even by such items of the rank and file as the schoolmaster of Cleopatra’s children, Euphronius, or Octavius’

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officers, Dolabella and Proculeius. The cast of the play is indeed innocent of walking ladies and walking gentlemen; however small the part, it is vivified by individually expressive sentiment.

Four personages are entitled to a closer examination. Octavius, Octavia, Lepidus and Enobarbus fill a place in the tragic story of small moment, compared with that of the hero and heroine. Yet any survey of the play, however perfunctory, compels some study of their distinguishing traits.

Viewed as dramatised history the ultimate significance of the tragedy centres in the triumph of Octavius, who is left by the catastrophe the supreme conqueror. All the obstacles to his singleness of dominion are swept away by the progress of events, and the scene closes on his unimpeded path to the imperial throne under the proud title of Augustus. There is irony in the completeness of Octavius' victory. The blood of his granduncle, Julius Cæsar (as we are reminded), "drenched the Capitol," because "courtiers of beautiful freedom . . . would have one man but a man." All the efforts of "the honest Roman Brutus" and of his friend "the lean and wrinkled Cassius" end in acclaiming the tyrant's heir "sole sir of the world."

The character of Octavius lacks the amplitude or warmth of colour which distinguishes his chief rival Antony. In "Julius Cæsar" he figures as a self-confident youth, who, despite a tendency to petulant obstinacy, is an admiring disciple of his brilliant colleague, Antony. The older man exerts on him a

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fascination, of which the effect, however dimmed by divergence of fortune and interest, is never quite obliterated. It is as a characterless "boy" with a pronounced prejudice against incurring undue danger,— "he at Philippi kept his sword e'en as a dancer,"—that Octavius always presents himself to Antony's mind, and that conception of him aggravates the torture of defeat at the "boy's" hand. But it is only Antony's perverted judgment that can detect in the adult Octavius inexperience or incapacity. Responsibilities have generated strength of will, self-control, and a calculating prudence. He has grown thoroughly alive to the grandeur of the undivided sway which Antony's delinquencies place within his grasp. Antony's abilities are beyond his scope. He is his inferior in soldierly resource. But in the qualities which go to form statesmen—in unimaginative solidity of outlook and in formidable common-sense—he is Antony's superior. His personal temperament renders irreparable the breach with his old master as soon as it begins. Excesses of all kinds are repugnant to him. He deprecates heavy drinking in the name of conviviality. Antony's self-indulgence and moral weakness excite his scorn and anger, and put it beside the question that he should show him mercy when he has him in his power. Stern of purpose, keensighted in his own interest, and astute in policy, he cherishes, at the same time, a certain magnanimity of temper, which preserves his action from any suspicion of malice or pettiness. He has no lack of the common measure of human affections. He

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treats his sister, Octavia, with brotherly tenderness, and he pays generous tributes to the memory of his fallen foes. Genuine emotion shakes his utterance in his magnificent apostrophe of the dead Antony. His boyish admiration for the tutor of his youth flashes anew through his splendid cry:—

“The death of Antony
Is not a single doom; in the name lay
A moiety of the world.” (V, i, 17-19.)

His thoughts turn involuntarily to the days when they worked and fought side by side. The ruin of his “mate in empire” draws from him “tears as sovereign as the blood of hearts.” So, too, when his astute plan of bringing Cleopatra alive to Rome to grace his triumph is foiled by her suicide, it is sincere pity for her sad fate and no mean sense of personal disappointment that gives the key to his elegiac epilogue. But Octavius’ reward is out of all proportion to his personal character or achievements. He, indeed, has better right than any other personage in the tragedy to the title of “the man of destiny” or child of circumstance. He wins the imperial crown largely by force of “natural luck” (II, iii, 26). Luck is always on his side. “The very dice obey him” (*ib.* 34 *et seq.*). If we are disinclined to assign (with Cleopatra) his triumph (V, ii, 284) wholly to “the luck of Cæsar,” it is impossible to assign his ascendancy to private merit or to personal charm.

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“Admired Octavia,” Octavius’ sister, who for purposes of policy becomes Antony’s wife, is a slighter sketch, but she is limned in sufficient detail to make her an effective foil of the great heroine. Octavius calls her in all sincerity “a piece of virtue,” and she is as liberally gifted with the feminine virtues which make for the purity of home life as her rival is endowed with the charms which expose domestic peace to fatal peril. Her voice is low. Her eyes carry a demure expression. She is slow in her gait. She suffers in silence, and her sorrows seek no solace in passionate outcry. Her grief resembles, in the eye of observers, a feather of swan’s-down

“That stands upon the swell at full of tide,”
And neither way inclines.” (III, ii, 48-50.)

Seriousness is the predominant note of her being. It is natural that the frivolous-minded should regard her as distant and dull. One critical observer credits her with “a holy, cold, and still conversation,” another remarks of her that “she shows a body rather than a life, a statue than a breather.” The contrast between the staid womanliness of Antony’s neglected wife and the vitality of his mistress is brought into high relief by Cleopatra’s frequent confessions of dread at meeting in the day of her ruin “the sober eye of dull Octavia” (V, ii, 54-55). “If knife, drug, serpents have edge, sting, or operation,” Cleopatra threatens to escape the humiliation of facing Octavia “with her modest eyes and still conclusion Demuring upon her.” (IV, xv, 25-29.)

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Two other minor personages, Lepidus and Enobarbus, are equally worthy of study. Their characters are virtually Shakespeare's own creation and owe little or nothing to Plutarch's suggestion. Both add dramatic variety to the tragic canvas. The triumvir Lepidus is an inanimate historic figure. Although his ambition was scarcely smaller than that of his colleagues, his lack of intellectual or military capacity deprives his career of genuine interest. Without historic authority Shakespeare in "Antony and Cleopatra" casts him in the mould of Polonius. He had already figured in "Julius Cæsar" as a "slight unmeritable man" whom Antonius scornfully likens to a theatrical "property." In "Antony and Cleopatra" he moves across the stage as a senile twaddler asking foolish questions and acquiescing in intentionally foolish answers. He professes extravagant esteem and affection for men of influence, and his obsequiousness exposes him to the just taunt that he has the body of a beetle without the wings. His wits are easily fuddled by drink, and although still "a triple pillar of the world," he is finally carried to bed in a drunken stupor by a slave. His subsequent deposition from power and his exile find obscure and incidental mention in the play. He is undeserving of prolonged notice, and Shakespeare is content to indicate that he meets an appropriate fate.

On Enobarbus Shakespeare bestows some of his finest insight. His full name in the tragedy is Domitius Enobarbus. In Plutarch Antony has two captains, one named Domitius, and the other named Domitius Enobarbus, both of whom enjoy their commander's

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confidence. Domitius ultimately deserts Antony's service without forfeiting Antony's good-will. Domitius Enobarbus survives Antony and marries one of his daughters by Octavia. But though Shakespeare's Enobarbus must be regarded as the offspring of this double parentage, the links which bind him to his prototypes are negligible. Shakespeare's Enobarbus is a rough soldier imbued with a robust common-sense and a sturdy ironical humour. He is a sworn foe to sophistries and illusions. He is no believer in the comfortable doctrine that "truth should be silent." Indeed his frank criticism of passing events invests him through the early portions of the play with the function of a chorus who sardonically warns the protagonists of the destiny awaiting their delinquencies and follies. This was a new adaptation of the choric principle in drama, and Shakespeare seems to have been well satisfied with the first experiment. He repeated it in "Coriolanus," the play on which he next worked. There the choric function is performed by the shrewd, yet kindly, Menenius. Enobarbus is crosser-grained than his successor, but he does not yield to Menenius in the broad humanity of his sympathies. His devotion to his master Antonius finally tears his heart asunder when Antony wantonly abandons his better self past recall. Enobarbus' sobriety of judgment then comes into conflict with his tenderness of heart. His mother-wit will not suffer him to serve fools:

"The loyalty well held to fools does make
Our faith mere folly." (III, xiii, 42-43.)

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At the last he deserts his master. But he has underestimated the force of his love. In the enemy's camp "he joys no more," and dies of remorse "a master leaver and a fugitive." Few passages in Shakespeare are more pathetic than Enobarbus' dying speech.

VII

Although Shakespeare's tragedy is by far the finest pronouncement on the historic theme of Antony's relations with Cleopatra, it was by no means the last word. In the historic chronicle of dramatic literature, it forms but the central link in a chain of dramatic effort which was already prolonged before Shakespeare's tragedy came into being, and underwent a more memorable extension subsequently. In France the series of dramas on the subject of Cleopatra knew no interruption from the time of Jodelle and Garnier in the sixteenth century to that of Marmontel in the eighteenth or to that of Madame De Girardin and Sardou in the nineteenth. In Germany the budding drama of the seventeenth century sought nourishment in the Queen of Egypt's passion as early as 1660 in the stilted "Cleopatra" of Daniel Casper von Lohenstein. Two other German dramatists — Cornelius von Ayrenhoff in 1783 and Julius Reichsgraf von Soden in 1793 — emulated this awkward experiment, and they were followed by a more notable writer, August von Kotzebue, who in 1801 gave Antony and Cleopatra leading rôles in his tragedy of "Octavia." Meanwhile the torch lit in Italy by

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Cinthio passed to the hand of Cardinal Delfino in 1660 and to that of Alfieri, who in 1775 first tried his hand at tragedy in his "Antonio e Cleopatra."¹

In England "the greatest dramatic wits of our nation" after Shakespeare's life ended sought fresh inspiration in the history of Antony and Cleopatra. A tragedy, "A False One," by Fletcher and Massinger, the chief of Shakespeare's immediate successors, restricts itself to that amour of Cleopatra with Julius Cæsar which preceded Antony's infatuation. The authors in their prologue gave the audience the somewhat doubtful assurance

"We treat not of what boldness she did dye,
Nor of her fatal love to Antony.
What we present and offer to your view,
Upon their faiths the Stage yet never knew."

There followed unimpressive versions of Shakespeare's main plot by the voluminous classicist Thomas May in 1639 and by the laureate of Restoration profligacy, Sir Charles Sedley, in 1667. Both writers crudely and frigidly echo the Shakespearean note. The only tragedy of that period on the subject of Antony and Cleopatra which claims critical interest is Dryden's drama "All for Love" (1678). Dryden affirmed that he wrote quite independently of "the divine Shakespeare," though he professed to imitate his style.

¹ An especially full survey of the dramatic literature on the subject of Antony and Cleopatra, which succeeded Shakespeare's play, will be found in Mr. H. H. Furness' admirable edition of that piece (1907) in his new "Variorum Shakespeare."

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

The progress of Dryden's story is varied by an open quarrel between Antony and his lieutenant Ventidius, while Antony's wife Octavia and his mistress Cleopatra meet to exchange furious reproaches. Students of Dryden are agreed that "All for Love" is the writer's masterpiece in drama. None would deny high dramatic spirit to many of Dryden's scenes. The unities are more carefully respected by Dryden than by Shakespeare, and the dramatic construction thereby gains in consistency. But the characterisation and the pervading temper set Dryden's endeavour in a category very inferior to that in which Shakespeare's luxuriance of dramatic power gives him pre-eminence.

More recent plays on the subject by Englishmen include a tragedy by Henry Brooke called "Antony and Cleopatra," which was printed in 1778, but was never acted, and a romantic version of Cleopatra's amour with Julius Cæsar called "Cæsar and Cleopatra" by Mr. George Bernard Shaw, which was published in 1898, and has been several times represented on the stage. Walter Savage Landor's "Antony and Cleopatra" (c. 1840) although it is entitled "a dialogue in verse" is a brief and spirited drama in twelve scenes, in which nearly all the characters in Shakespeare's play find place.

The looseness of construction, which characterises Shakespeare's play, probably accounts for the sporadic favour which has been extended to it by theatrical managers in England. The multitude of the "dramatis personæ," and the numerous scenic divisions, which

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reach a total of forty-two, present, too, obstacles to its representation on the stage, in spite of the attraction for actor and actress of the characters of Antony and of Cleopatra. Dryden's "All for Love" in the later years of the seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth altogether outstripped Shakespeare's tragedy in theatrical popularity in London. Garrick achieved in 1758 a very limited measure of success in a revision of Shakespeare's play by the Shakespearean scholar, Edward Capell. Other adaptations were made for stage purposes by John Philip Kemble in 1813, and by Macready in 1833, both of whom won applause in the part of Antony, although their performances were few. More notable was the revival of the piece in its original shape by Samuel Phelps in 1850, when Miss Glyn supplied an interpretation of the rôle of Cleopatra which holds a prominent place in the stage-history of the play. Later English revivals have largely depended for their impressiveness on the sumptuousness of the scenic setting. Among the most recent productions in England Mr. Beerbohm Tree's presentation of the tragedy at His Majesty's Theatre, London, in the winter of 1906-1907, is entitled to honourable mention.

In continental Europe, where public taste encourages the theatrical representation of Shakespeare's plays with simple scenic accessories, "Antony and Cleopatra" is far more frequently acted than in English-speaking countries. The tragedy is permanently enrolled in the repertory of the great acting companies of Germany.

SIDNEY LEE.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ¹

ANTONY,
OCTAVIUS CÆSAR, } triumvirs.
LEPIDUS, }

SEXTUS POMPEIUS.

DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS,
VENTIDIUS,
EROS,
SCARUS,
DERCETAS,
DEMETRIUS,
PHILO

} friends to Antony.

MÆCENAS,
AGRIPPA,
DOLABELLA,
PROCULEIUS,
THYREUS,
GALLUS.

} friends to Cæsar.

MENAS,
MENECRATES, } friends to Sextus Pompeius.
VARRIUS.

TAURUS, lieutenant-general to Cæsar.

CANIDIUS, lieutenant-general to Antony.

SILIUS, an officer in Ventidius's army.

EUPHRONIUS, an ambassador from Antony to Cæsar.

ALEXAS,
MARDIAN, a eunuch,
SELEUCUS,
DIOMEDES,

} attendants on Cleopatra.

A Soothsayer.

A Clown.

CLEOPATRA, queen of Egypt.

OCTAVIA, sister to Cæsar, and wife to Antony.

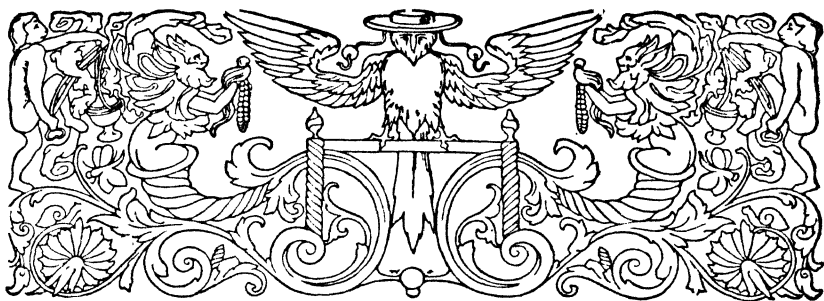
CHARMIAN, } attendants on Cleopatra.
IRAS, }

IRAS,

Officers, Soldiers, Messengers, and other Attendants.

SCENE: *In several parts of the Roman empire*

¹ This play was first printed in the First Folio of 1623. "Actus Primus. Scæna Prima" heads the text, but there is no other indication of Acts or Scenes. Those subdivisions were like the list of "dramatis personæ" first supplied by Rowe in 1709.



ACT FIRST — SCENE I — ALEXANDRIA
A ROOM IN CLEOPATRA'S PALACE

Enter DEMETRIUS and PHILO

PHILO



NAY, BUT THIS DOTAGE
of our general's
O'erflows the measure: those
his goodly eyes,
That o'er the files and musters
of the war
Have glow'd like plated Mars,
now bend, now turn,
The office and devotion of their
view
Upon a tawny front: his cap-
tain's heart,
Which in the scuffles of great
fights hath burst

The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper,
And is become the bellows and the fan
To cool a gipsy's lust.

⁴ *plated*] armour-clothed. Cf. *Rich. II.*, I, iii, 28: "*plated in habiliments of war.*"

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT I

Flourish. Enter ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, her Ladies, the Train, with Eunuchs fanning her

Look, where they come:

10

Take but good note, and you shall see in him
The triple pillar of the world transform'd
Into a strumpet's fool: behold and see.

CLEO. If it be love indeed, tell me how much.

ANT. There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd.

CLEO. I'll set a bourn how far to be beloved.

ANT. Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth.

Enter an Attendant

ATT. News, my good lord, from Rome.

ANT. Grates me: the sum.

6 a tawny front] Cleopatra was of pure Greek blood, and though of dark complexion could only in the way of exaggerated depreciation be described as of "a tawny visage."

8 *reneges all temper*] renounces all his wonted disposition.

9-10 *the bellows . . . gipsy's lust*] Cf. Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, II, ix, 30: "bellows which did styre Continually and cooling breath inspyre."
"Gypsy" is a vague term of contempt; see *Rom. and Jul.*, II, iv, 41: "Dido a dowdy, Cleopatra a gypsy."

12 *The triple pillar*] The third pillar, one of three. Cf. *All's Well*, II, i, 107: "a triple eye." Antony was one of the triumvirs, Octavius and Lepidus being the other two.

15 *There's beggary . . . reckon'd*] Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, II, vi, 32: "They are but beggars that can count their worth." The proverbial phrase is common in Latin poetry. Cf. Ovid's *Metam.*, xiii, 824: "pauperis est numerare pecus" and Martial, *Epigr.*, vi, 34: "pauca cupit qui numerare potest."

16 *born*] boundary, limit.

18 *Grates me: the sum*] This jars on me; let me have the substance

SCENE I ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

CLEO. Nay, hear them, Antony:
 Fulvia perchance is angry; or, who knows 20
 If the scarce-bearded Cæsar have not sent
 His powerful mandate to you, "Do this, or this;
 Take in that kingdom, and enfranchise that;
 Perform 't, or else we damn thee."

ANT. How, my love!

CLEO. Perchance! nay, and most like:
 You must not stay here longer, your dismissal
 Is come from Cæsar; therefore hear it, Antony.
 Where's Fulvia's process? Cæsar's I would say? both?
 Call in the messengers. As I am Egypt's queen,
 Thou blushest, Antony, and that blood of thine 30
 Is Cæsar's homager: else so thy cheek pays shame
 When shrill-tongued Fulvia scolds. The messengers!

ANT. Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch
 Of the ranged empire fall! Here is my space.
 Kingdoms are clay: our dungy earth alike
 Feeds beast as man: the nobleness of life
 Is to do thus; when such a mutual pair [Embracing.]
 And such a twain can do 't, in which I bind,

in brief. Thus the First Folio. For *Grates me* the later Folios
 read *Rate me* which might mean "enumerate." No change is
 needful.

19 *them*] the news (in plural). Cf. the corresponding passage in North's
 Plutarch: "Very ill news were brought him."

23 *Take in*] Conquer, subdue; cf. III, vii, 23, and III, xiii, 83, *infra*.

28 *process*] summons, citation; a legal term.

31 *homager*] one who owes homage.

34 *ranged*] well-ordered, well-built.

35 *dungy earth*] Cf. *Wint. Tale*, II, i, 157: "the whole *dungy earth*."

On pain of punishment, the world to weet
We stand up peerless.

CLEO. Excellent falsehood! 40
Why did he marry Fulvia, and not love her?
I'll seem the fool I am not; Antony
Will be himself.

ANT. But stirr'd by Cleopatra.
Now, for the love of Love and her soft hours,
Let's not confound the time with conference harsh:
There's not a minute of our lives should stretch
Without some pleasure now. What sport to-night?

CLEO. Hear the ambassadors.

ANT. Fie, wrangling queen!
Whom every thing becomes, to chide, to laugh,
To weep; whose every passion fully strives 50
To make itself, in thee, fair and admired!
No messenger but thine; and all alone
To-night we'll wander through the streets and note

39 *to weet*] to know.

40 *falsehood*] false creature; the abstract for the concrete.

41 *Fulvia*] Fulvia, a cross-grained, ambitious woman, had married Antony
as her third husband.

42-43 *I'll seem . . . by Cleopatra*] Cleopatra means that in giving
herself up to Antony she is not so foolish as to ignore his faithlessness to
his wife. Antony will yet discover his faithless character and forsake
his new love. Antony retorts that his being is not what it was, now
that he is moved by Cleopatra's influence. Philo continues the com-
ment on Antony's alternations of personality at lines 57-59, *infra*.

Cf. also I, iii, 27-31, *infra*.

44 *Love*] i. e., the queen or goddess of love, Venus.

45 *confound*] consume, waste.

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

The qualities of people. Come, my queen;
Last night you did desire it. Speak not to us.

[Exeunt Ant. and Cleo. with their train.]

DEM. Is Cæsar with Antonius prized so slight?

PHI. Sir, sometimes, when he is not Antony,
He comes too short of that great property
Which still should go with Antony.

DEM. I am full sorry
That he approves the common liar, who
Thus speaks of him at Rome: but I will hope
Of better deeds to-morrow. Rest you happy! *[Exeunt.]*

60

SCENE II — THE SAME

ANOTHER ROOM

Enter CHARMIAN, IRAS, ALEXAS, *and a* Soothsayer

CHAR. Lord Alexas, sweet Alexas, most any thing
Alexas, almost most absolute Alexas, where's the sooth-
sayer that you praised so to the queen? O, that I knew

54 qualities] dispositions.

58 that great property] that characteristic of greatness.

60 approves] attests, corroborates.

SCENE II. *Enter Charmian . . . Soothsayer*] The Folios add to these characters Enobarbus (who obviously makes his first entry at line 10, *infra*), together with Lamprius, Rannius, Lucillius, and Mardian the Eunuch, none of whom appear in the scene itself, and only one of whom, Mardian the Eunuch, figures elsewhere in the play. Lamprius or Lampryas is casually noticed by Plutarch; he was the biographer's grandfather, and while a student at Alexandria, made friends with one of Mark Antony's cooks, who showed him over Antony's kitchens. Rannius and Lucillius are superfluities for whom it is difficult to account.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT I

this husband, which, you say, must charge his horns with garlands!

ALEX. Soothsayer!

SOOTH. Your will?

CHAR. Is this the man? Is't you, sir, that know things?

SOOTH. In nature's infinite book of secrecy
A little I can read.

ALEX. Show him your hand.

10

Enter ENOBARBUS

ENO. Bring in the banquet quickly; wine enough
Cleopatra's health to drink.

CHAR. Good sir, give me good fortune.

SOOTH. I make not, but foresee.

CHAR. Pray then, foresee me one.

SOOTH. You shall be yet far fairer than you are.

CHAR. He means in flesh.

IRAS. No, you shall paint when you are old.

CHAR. Wrinkles forbid!

ALEX. Vex not his prescience; be attentive.

20

CHAR. Hush!

SOOTH. You shall be more loving than beloved.

CHAR. I had rather heat my liver with drinking.

4-5 *must charge . . . garlands*] must wear the signs of conjugal dishonour as though they were a desirable ornament. *Charge* is Theobald's and Warburton's reasonable emendation of the Folio reading *change*, which could only give the weak meaning that Charmian's supposititious husband would have to exchange his marks of conjugal disgrace for the garlands or chaplets of conjugal honour.

23 *I had rather heat my liver with drinking*] The liver was held to be the

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

ALEX. Nay, hear him.

CHAR. Good now, some excellent fortune! Let me be married to three kings in a forenoon, and widow them all: let me have a child at fifty, to whom Herod of Jewry may do homage: find me to marry me with Octavius Cæsar, and companion me with my mistress.

SOOTH. You shall outlive the lady whom you serve. 30

CHAR. O excellent! I love long life better than figs.

SOOTH. You have seen and proved a fairer former fortune

Than that which is to approach.

CHAR. Then belike my children shall have no names: prithee, how many boys and wenches must I have?

SOOTH. If every of your wishes had a womb,
And fertile every wish, a million.

seat of love, and was judged at the same time to be sensitive to the effects of wine. Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, I, i, 81: "let my liver rather heat with wine."

27-28 *a child . . . do homage*] A somewhat blasphemous reference to *Matthew*, ii, 8, where Herod says: "Go and search diligently for the young child, and when ye have found him, bring me word again that I may come and worship him also." For another reference to Herod of Jewry, cf. III, iii, 3, *infra*.

29 *companion me . . . mistress*] Were she to become wife of Octavius, Charmian would naturally be of the same rank as Cleopatra.

31 *I love long life better than figs*] A proverbial expression. Figs are often reckoned poisonous and a means of shortening life.

34 *my children shall have no names*] my children shall be bastards. Cf. *Lucrece*, 522: "Thy issue blurr'd with *nameless* bastardy."

37 *fertile*] Theobald's correction of the Folio reading *foretell*, which has been interpreted as "If I should foretell all your wishes."

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT I

CHAR. Out, fool! I forgive thee for a witch.

ALEX. You think none but your sheets are privy to
your wishes. 40

CHAR. Nay, come, tell Iras hers.

ALEX. We'll know all our fortunes.

ENO. Mine and most of our fortunes to-night shall
be — drunk to bed.

IRAS. There's a palm presages chastity, if nothing else.

CHAR. E'en as the o'erflowing Nilus presageth famine.

IRAS. Go, you wild bedfellow, you cannot soothsay.

CHAR. Nay, if an oily palm be not a fruitful prognos-
tication, I cannot scratch mine ear. Prithee, tell her but
a worky-day fortune. 50

SOOTH. Your fortunes are alike.

IRAS. But how, but how? give me particulars.

SOOTH. I have said.

IRAS. Am I not an inch of fortune better than she?

CHAR. Well, if you were but an inch of fortune better
than I, where would you choose it?

IRAS. Not in my husband's nose.

CHAR. Our worser thoughts heavens mend! Alexas,
— come, his fortune, his fortune! O, let him marry a

38 *for a witch*] As you are a wizard, who is privileged to say disagreeable
things.

48-49 *if an oily palm . . . prognostication*] Cf. *Othello*, III, iv, 33-35:
"This hand is moist, my lady. . . . This argues fruitfulness and
liberal heart."

49 *I cannot scratch mine ear*] I am a helpless fool; a proverbial phrase.

50 *worky-day*] work-a-day, every-day, ordinary.

58-59 *Alexas, — come*] The Folios treat Alexas as the name of the speaker
to whom the rest of the speech is assigned. Theobald rightly con-

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

woman that cannot go, sweet Isis, I beseech thee ! and 60
let her die too, and give him a worse ! and let worse fol-
low worse, till the worst of all follow him laughing to
his grave, fifty-fold a cuckold ! Good Isis, hear me this
prayer, though thou deny me a matter of more weight ;
good Isis, I beseech thee !

IRAS. Amen. Dear goddess, hear that prayer of the
people ! for, as it is a heart-breaking to see a handsome
man loose-wived, so it is a deadly sorrow to behold a foul
knave uncuckolded : therefore, dear Isis, keep decorum,
and fortune him accordingly !

CHAR. Amen.

70

ALEX. Lo, now, if it lay in their hands to make me a
cuckold, they would make themselves whores, but
they'd do 't !

ENO. Hush ! here comes Antony.

CHAR.

Not he ; the queen.

Enter CLEOPATRA

CLEO. Saw you my lord ?

ENO. No, lady.

CLEO. Was he not here ?

CHAR. No, madam.

CLEO. He was disposed to mirth ; but on the sudden
A Roman thought hath struck him. Enobarbus ! 80

tinued the words to Charmian, in agreement with the context. All
the speeches of Alexas in the Folios are headed "Alex" not "Alexas."

60 *cannot go*] cannot bear children.

sweet Isis] The Egyptian deity, who divided divine power with her
brother god, Osiris.

65-66 *that prayer of the people*] that prayer of the public, that generally
approved prayer.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT I

ENO. Madam?

CLEO. Seek him, and bring him hither. Where's
Alexas?

ALEX. Here, at your service. My lord approaches.

CLEO. We will not look upon him: go with us.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter ANTONY with a Messenger and Attendants

MESS. Fulvia thy wife first came into the field.

ANT. Against my brother Lucius?

MESS. Ay:

But soon that war had end, and the time's state
Made friends of them, jointing their force 'gainst Cæsar,
Whose better issue in the war from Italy
Upon the first encounter drave them.

ANT. Well, what worst?

MESS. The nature of bad news infects the teller.

ANT. When it concerns the fool or coward. On:
Things that are past are done with me. 'Tis thus;
Who tells me true, though in his tale lie death,
I hear him as he flatter'd.

MESS. Labienus —

This is stiff news — hath with his Parthian force
Extended Asia from Euphrates,

88 *the time's state*] the state of affairs.

89 *jointing*] conjoining, combining.

90 *Extended*] Seized upon (in the legal sense). Cf. the substantive "*Extent*," i. e., "legal seizure," in *As you like it*, III, i, 17: "Make an *extent* upon his house and lands."

Euphrates] Accented on the first and third syllables. "Asia" is a trisyllable.

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

His conquering banner shook from Syria
To Lydia and to Ionia,
Whilst —

100

ANT. Antony, thou wouldst say,—

MESS. O, my lord!

ANT. Speak to me home, mince not the general
tongue:

Name Cleopatra as she is call'd in Rome;
Rail thou in Fulvia's phrase, and taunt my faults
With such full license as both truth and malice
Have power to utter. O, then we bring forth weeds
When our quick minds lie still, and our ills told us
Is as our earring. Fare thee well awhile.

MESS. At your noble pleasure. *[Exit.]*

ANT. From Sicyon, ho, the news! Speak there! 110

FIRST ATT. The man from Sicyon, is there such an
one?

SEC. ATT. He stays upon your will.

ANT. Let him appear.

These strong Egyptian fetters I must break,
Or lose myself in dotage.

102 *home*] directly, without mincing matters.

106-108 *O, then we bring forth . . . earring*] The meaning is "whe. we are immersed in sloth and luxury, and our active mental faculties are stagnating, then we engender weeds (instead of fruits), but a plain statement of our sinfulness is as the ploughing up of the fallow soil in us, and a stirring of the hope of harvest." "Earring" in the sense of "ploughing" is common. *Minds* is Hanmer's correction of the Folio reading *winds*, which has been explained unconvincingly as a figurative reference either to brisk, searching winds which make the earth fruitful, or to the rough breath of public censure, which prevents the growth of moral weeds.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT I

Enter another Messenger

What are you ?

SEC. MESS. Fulvia thy wife is dead.

ANT. Where died she ?

SEC. MESS. In Sicyon :

Her length of sickness, with what else more serious
Importeth thee to know, this bears. *[Gives a letter.]*

ANT. Forbear me.

[Exit Sec. Messenger.]

There's a great spirit gone ! Thus did I desire it :
What our contempts do often hurl from us, 120
We wish it ours again ; the present pleasure,
By revolution lowering, does become
The opposite of itself : she's good, being gone ;
The hand could pluck her back that shoved her on.
I must from this enchanting queen break off :
Ten thousand harms, more than the ills I know,
My idleness doth hatch. How now ! Enobarbus !

Re-enter ENOBARBUS

ENO. What's your pleasure, sir ?

ANT. I must with haste from hence.

ENO. Why then we kill all our women. We see how

118 *Forbear me*] Leave my presence.

121-123 *the present pleasure . . . opposite of itself*] the immediate pleasure,
by change of circumstance, by a revolution of fortune's wheel, becomes
the very opposite of a joy, is converted into grief.

124 *could pluck*] would willingly pluck.

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

mortal an unkindness is to them; if they suffer our departure, death's the word.

132

ANT. I must be gone.

ENO. Under a compelling occasion let women die: it were pity to cast them away for nothing; though, between them and a great cause, they should be esteemed nothing. Cleopatra, catching but the least noise of this, dies instantly; I have seen her die twenty times upon far poorer moment: I do think there is mettle in death, which commits some loving act upon her, she hath such a celerity in dying.

ANT. She is cunning past man's thought.

141

ENO. Alack, sir, no; her passions are made of nothing but the finest part of pure love: we cannot call her winds and waters sighs and tears; they are greater storms and tempests than almanacs can report: this cannot be cunning in her; if it be, she makes a shower of rain as well as Jove.

ANT. Would I had never seen her!

ENO. O, sir, you had then left unseen a wonderful piece of work; which not to have been blest withal would have discredited your travel.

150

ANT. Fulvia is dead.

ENO. Sir?

ANT. Fulvia is dead.

ENO. Fulvia!

ANT. Dead.

ENO. Why, sir, give the gods a thankful sacrifice. When it pleaseth their deities to take the wife of a man

138-139 *upon far poorer moment*] for far less reason, upon far smaller motive.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT I

from him, it shows to man the tailors of the earth, comforting therein, that when old robes are worn out there are members to make new. If there were no more women but Fulvia, then had you indeed a cut, and the case to be lamented: this grief is crowned with consolation; your old smock brings forth a new petticoat; and indeed the tears live in an onion that should water this sorrow.

ANT. The business she hath broached in the state 165
Cannot endure my absence.

ENO. And the business you have broached here cannot be without you; especially that of Cleopatra's, which wholly depends on your abode.

ANT. No more light answers. Let our officers 170
Have notice what we purpose. I shall break
The cause of our expedience to the queen
And get her leave to part. For not alone
The death of Fulvia, with more urgent touches,
Do strongly speak to us, but the letters too

158-160 *it shows to man . . . make new*] This act of the deities (in depriving a man of his wife) recalls to the bereaved husband the existence of earthly tailors, who can always replace a worn-out article of apparel with a new one. There is comfort in the reflection that when old robes are worn out, there are members of the community ready to make new ones.

161 *a cut*] a wound from a blow; with a quibble on the word in the sense of "the cut" or shape of clothes.

172 *expedience*] hasty departure.

173 *leave*] Pope's correction of the Folio reading *loue*, which would make the sentence mean "and prevail on her love to consent to our parting."

174 *urgent touches*] pressing motives.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT I

SCENE III — THE SAME

ANOTHER ROOM

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRIS, and ALEXAS

CLEO. Where is he?

CHAR. I did not see him since.

CLEO. See where he is, who's with him, what he does:
I did not send you: if you find him sad,
Say I am dancing; if in mirth, report
That I am sudden sick: quick, and return. [*Exit Alexas.*]

CHAR. Madam, methinks, if you did love him dearly
You do not hold the method to enforce
The like from him.

CLEO. What should I do, I do not?

CHAR. In each thing give him way, cross him in
nothing.

CLEO. Thou teachest like a fool: the way to lose him. ¹⁰

CHAR. Tempt him not so too far; I wish, forbear:
In time we hate that which we often fear.
But here comes Antony.

Enter ANTONY

CLEO. I am sick and sullen.

ANT. I am sorry to give breathing to my purpose, —

⁸ *I did not send you*] Act as if I did not send you. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*,

IV, ii, 71: "We met by chance; you did not find me here."

¹¹ *I wish, forbear*] I commend forbearance.

SCENE III ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

CLEO. Help me away, dear Charmian; I shall fall:
It cannot be thus long, the sides of nature
Will not sustain it.

ANT. Now, my dearest queen, —

CLEO. Pray you, stand farther from me.

ANT. What's the matter?

CLEO. I know, by that same eye, there's some good
news.

What says the married woman? You may go: 20

Would she had never given you leave to come!

Let her not say 't is I that keep you here,

I have no power upon you; hers you are.

ANT. The gods best know —

CLEO. O, never was there queen
So mightily betray'd! yet at the first
I saw the treasons planted.

ANT. Cleopatra, —

CLEO. Why should I think you can be mine and true,
Though you in swearing shake the throned gods,
Who have been false to Fulvia? Riotous madness,
To be entangled with those mouth-made vows, 30
Which break themselves in swearing!

ANT. Most sweet queen, —

CLEO. Nay, pray you, seek no colour for your going,
But bid farewell, and go: when you sued staying.

16 *the sides of nature*] Cf. *Tw. Night*, II, iv, 92-93: "There is no woman's
sides Can bide the beating of so strong a passion."

27-31 *Why should I think . . . swearing*] Cf. I, i, 42-43, *supra*, and note.

29 *Riotous madness*] Cleopatra is crediting herself with the self-decep-
tion of a frenzied insanity.

32 *colour*] pretext, pretence.

Then was the time for words: no going then;
Eternity was in our lips and eyes,
Bliss in our brows' bent, none our parts so poor
But was a race of heaven: they are so still,
Or thou, the greatest soldier of the world,
Art turn'd the greatest liar.

CLEO. I would I had thy inches; thou shouldst know 40
There were a heart in Egypt.

ANT. Hear me, queen:
The strong necessity of time commands
Our services awhile; but my full heart
Remains in use with you. Our Italy
Shines o'er with civil swords: Sextus Pompeius
Makes his approaches to the port of Rome:
Equality of two domestic powers
Breed scrupulous faction: the hated, grown to strength,
Are newly grown to love: the condemn'd Pompey,
Rich in his father's honour, creeps apace
Into the hearts of such as have not thrived
Upon the present state, whose numbers threaten;

37 a race] a smack or flavour. The word is specially applied to the taste of wine. Cf. Massinger, *New Way*, I, iii, "rich canary . . . of the right race."

46 *the port of Rome]* Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber, which Sextus Pompeius' fleet was approaching.

[20]

SCENE III ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

And quietness grown sick of rest would purge
By any desperate change. My more particular,
And that which most with you should save my going,
Is Fulvia's death.

CLEO. Though age from folly could not give me freedom,
It does from childishness: can Fulvia die?

ANT. She's dead, my queen:
Look here, and at thy sovereign leisure read 60
The garboils she awaked: at the last, best;
See when and where she died.

CLEO. O most false love!
Where be the sacred vials thou shouldst fill
With sorrowful water? Now I see, I see,
In Fulvia's death, how mine received shall be.

ANT. Quarrel no more, but be prepared to know
The purposes I bear, which are, or cease,
As you shall give the advice. By the fire
That quickens Nilus' slime, I go from hence

53 *purge*] seek a cure.

54-55 *My more particular . . . going*] More immediate reason for going,
a reason which would render my departure safe as far as you are
concerned. For "safe" as a verb, cf. IV, vi, 26, *infra*: "you *safed* the
bringer."

58 *It does . . . die?*] Age exempts me from the childishness of believing
all I hear. I cannot believe that Fulvia is dead.

61 *garboils*] tumults, commotions. Cf. II, ii, 71, *infra*.
at the last, best] "at the last" means merely, "finally." "Best" seems
here a vocative term of endearment like "dearest," and the semi-
colon may well be replaced by a comma. Cf. *Hamlet*, II, ii, 120:
"but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it."

63 *sacred vials*] the bottles filled with tears of kinsfolk, placed by Romans
in the urns containing the ashes of their dead friends.

67 *are, or cease*] go on or end.

Thy soldier, servant, making peace or war 70
As thou affect'st.

CLEO. Cut my lace, Charmian, come;
But let it be: I am quickly ill and well,
So Antony loves.

ANT. My precious queen, forbear;
And give true evidence to his love, which stands
An honourable trial.

CLEO. So Fulvia told me.
I prithee, turn aside and weep for her;
Then bid adieu to me, and say the tears
Belong to Egypt: good now, play one scene
Of excellent dissembling, and let it look
Like perfect honour.

ANT. You'll heat my blood: no more. 80

CLEO. You can do better yet; but this is meetly.

ANT. Now, by my sword, —

CLEO. And target. Still he mends;
But this is not the best. Look, prithee, Charmian,
How this Herculean Roman does become
The carriage of his chafe.

72-73 *I am quickly ill and well, So Antony loves*] Cleopatra's health is quick to recover from illness if Antony be steadfast in his love. Some editors place a colon after *well*, giving the sentence the meaning "Antony's love is fluctuating as my health."

74 *give true evidence to*] accept true testimony for.

75 *So Fulvia told me*] A bantering way of saying "I understood as much from your relations to Fulvia." Cleopatra had no personal intercourse with Antony's wife.

78 *Belong to Egypt*] Belong to me, the Queen of Egypt.

81 *this is meetly*] this is pretty fair; you'll act better with more practice.

84 *this Herculean Roman*] According to tradition recorded by Plutarch,

SCENE III ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

ANT. I'll leave you, lady.

CLEO. Courteous lord, one word.

Sir, you and I must part, but that's not it:

Sir, you and I have loved, but there's not it:

That you know well: something it is I would, —

O, my oblivion is a very Antony,

90

And I am all forgotten.

ANT. But that your royalty

Holds idleness your subject, I should take you

For idleness itself.

CLEO. 'Tis sweating labour

To bear such idleness so near the heart

As Cleopatra this. But, sir, forgive me,

Since my becoming's kill me when they do not

the "family of the Antonii were descended from one Anton, the son of Hercules . . . whereof the family took name. This opinion did Antonius seek to confirm in all his doings." Cf. IV, xii, 44, *infra*, where Antony apostrophises "Alcides (*i. e.*, Hercules), thou mine ancestor."

84-85 *does become . . . chafe*] Cleopatra here lightly indicates a change of mood. She bids Charmian note that Antony is taking her chaff of him too seriously, is actually moved to anger by taunts which are not seriously meant.

90-91 *O, my oblivion . . . forgotten*] O, my forgetful memory is deserting me just like Antony himself, and I have lost memory of everything.

91-93 *But that your royalty . . . itself*] If it were not that your queenly majesty renders frivolity or frivolous discourse "your subject," holds it at your beck and call, I should imagine that you were frivolity itself, that you were the incarnation of levity.

96 *my becoming's*] my graces and prerogatives, the qualities that fit my state.

96-97 *kill me . . . to you*] are death to me when they do not appear well in your eyes.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT I

Eye well to you. Your honour calls you hence;
 Therefore be deaf to my unpitied folly,
 And all the gods go with you! Upon your sword
 Sit laurel victory! and smooth success 100
 Be strew'd before your feet!

ANT. Let us go. Come;
 Our separation so abides and flies,
 That thou residing here go'st yet with me,
 And I hence fleeting here remain with thee.
 Away! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV — ROME

CÆSAR'S HOUSE

*Enter OCTAVIUS CÆSAR, reading a letter, LEPIDUS, and
 their train*

CÆS. You may see, Lepidus, and henceforth know,
 It is not Cæsar's natural vice to hate
 Our great competitor: from Alexandria
 This is the news: he fishes, drinks and wastes
 The lamps of night in revel: is not more manlike

100 *laurel*] Thus the First Folio. The later Folios read *Lawrell'd*.

103-104 *That thou residing . . . with thee*] The sentiment is very common in love-poetry: cf. *Sonnet* xlvii, 10: "Thyself away art present still with me." See also Plautus, *Mercator*, III, iv, 2: "Si domi sum, foris est animus: sin foris sum, animus domi est." (If I am at home, my mind's abroad; if I am abroad, my mind's at home.)

3 *Our*] an accepted correction of the Folio reading *One*.

competitor] associate, partner, colleague. Cf. V, i, 42, *infra*: "my brother my *competitor*."

Than Cleopatra, nor the queen of Ptolemy
More womanly than he: hardly gave audience, or
Vouchsafed to think he had partners: you shall find
there

LEP. I must not think there are 10

CÆS. You are too indulgent. Let us grant it is not
Amis to tumble on the bed of Ptolemy,
To give a kingdom for a mirth, to sit
And keep the turn of tippling with a slave,
To reel the streets at noon and stand the buffet 20
With knaves that smell of sweat: say this becomes him,—
As his composure must be rare indeed
Whom these things cannot blemish, — yet must Antony

12 *the spots of heaven*] the comet-like blazes in the sky, rather than the stars which can hardly be likened to blemishes. But cf. *Hamlet*, V, ii, 247-249: "in my ignorance Your skill shall, like a *star i' the darkest night*, Stick *fiery* off indeed." The enveloping "blackness" is the domestic crisis evoked by Sextus Pompeius' menaces.

22 *composure*] constitution, character.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT I

No way excuse his soils, when we do bear
 So great weight in his lightness. If he fill'd
 His vacancy with his voluptuousness,
 Full surfeits and the dryness of his bones
 Call on him for 't: but to confound such time
 That drums him from his sport and speaks as loud
 As his own state and ours, 't is to be chid 30
 As we rate boys, who, being mature in knowledge,
 Pawn their experience to their present pleasure,
 And so rebel to judgement.

Enter a Messenger

LEP. Here's more news.

MESS. Thy biddings have been done; and every
 hour,
 Most noble Cæsar, shalt thou have report
 How 't is abroad. Pompey is strong at sea;
 And it appears he is beloved of those
 That only have fear'd Cæsar: to the ports

24 *soils*] Malone's correction of the Folio reading *foyls*, which, however, well suits the context in its sense of "disgrace" or "stigma."

25 *So great . . . lightness*] Such heavy burden, or responsibility from his levity.

26 *vacancy*] leisure.

28 *Call on him*] Call him to account.

confound] consume, waste; as at I, i, 45, *supra*. The context gives "confound such time" here the significance of "ignore such calls of time" (or such emergencies).

31 *boys, who, being mature in knowledge*] boys, who being quite old enough to know better. "Boys" is often used by Shakespeare for "young men," who are endowed with a certain experience of life.

38 *fear'd Cæsar*] adhered to Cæsar from fear, not love.

SCENE IV ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

The discontents repair, and men's reports
Give him much wrong'd.

CÆS. I should have known no less: 40
It hath been taught us from the primal state,
That he which is was wish'd until he were;
And the ebb'd man, ne'er loved till ne'er worth love,
Comes dear'd by being lack'd. This common body;
Like to a vagabond flag upon the stream,
Goes to and back, lackeying the varying tide,
To rot itself with motion.

MESS. Cæsar, I bring thee word,
Menecrates and Menas, famous pirates,
Make the sea serve them, which they ear and wound
With keels of every kind: many hot inroads 50
They make in Italy; the borders maritime

39 *discontents*] malcontents.

41-44 *It hath been taught . . . lack'd*] We have learnt from the beginning of time that the man in power enjoyed love up to the very moment that he gained power, and the man whose fortune has declined, who was never loved till his ill-fortune made him not worth anybody's affection, becomes loved as soon as his power has gone, as soon as his power is missed. Cf. *Cor.*, IV, i, 15: "I shall be *loved* when I am *lack'd*." *Dear'd* is Warburton's change for *fear'd* of the Folios; but *fear'd* is intelligible, and suggests that the disposessed and discredited ruler, who never won his people's love, might come to be feared or respected owing to a popular demand for his return to power.

45 *a vagabond flag upon the stream*] a wandering rush or reed floating on the stream.

46 *lackeying*] dancing attendance on like a lackey. Theobald's emendation of the Folio reading *lacking*.

49 *ear*] plough. Cf. I, ii, 108, *supra*: "earring."

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT I

Lack blood to think on 't, and flush youth revolt:
 No vessel can peep forth, but 'tis as soon
 Taken as seen; for Pompey's name strikes more
 Than could his war resisted.

CÆS.

Antony,

Leave thy lascivious wassails. When thou once
 Wast beaten from Modena, where thou slew'st
 Hirtius and Pansa, consuls, at thy heel
 Did famine follow; whom thou fought'st against,
 Though dairftily brought up, with patience more 60
 Than savages could suffer: thou didst drink
 The stale of horses and the gilded puddle
 Which beasts would cough at: thy palate then did deign
 The roughest berry on the rudest hedge;
 Yea, like the stag, when snow the pasture sheets,
 The barks of trees thou browsedst. On the Alps
 It is reported thou didst eat strange flesh,
 Which some did die to look on: and all this —
 It wounds thine honour that I speak it now —
 Was borne so like a soldier that thy cheek 70
 So much as lank'd not.

LEP.

'Tis pity of him.

52 *Lack blood* . . . *revolt*] Turn pale at the thought of it, and youth in
 the first flush of manhood rises in rebellion.

56 *wassails*] revelings. Pope's emendation of the Folio reading *vassailles*
 or *vassals*.

57 *Modena*] here wrongly accented on the second syllable like "Verona."

All these details of Antony's conduct come verbatim from Plutarch.

59 *whom*] The antecedent is "famine."

62 *the gilded puddle*] from the reddish, gold-coloured slime observable on
 stagnant pools.

71 *lank'd*] shrank, showed lankness.

SCENE V ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

CÆS. Let his shames quickly
Drive him to Rome: 't is time we twain
Did show ourselves i' the field; and to that end
Assemble we immediate council: Pompey
Thrives in our idleness.

LEP. To-morrow, Cæsar,
I shall be furnish'd to inform you rightly
Both what by sea and land I can be able
To front this present time.

CÆS. Till which encounter,
It is my business too. Farewell.

80

LEP. Farewell, my lord: what you shall know mean-
time
Of stirs abroad, I shall beseech you, sir,
To let me be partaker.

CÆS. Doubt not, sir;
I knew it for my bond.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V — ALEXANDRIA

CLEOPATRA'S PALACE

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and MARDIAN

CLEO. Charmian!

CHAR. Madam?

CLEO. Ha, ha!

Give me to drink mandragora.

CHAR. Why, madam?

79 *To front*] In order to meet.

84 *I knew it for my bond*] I regarded it as my bounden duty.

4 *mandragora*] an herb, of which the infusion was a powerful opiate.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT I

CLEO. That I might sleep out this great gap of time
My Antony is away.

CHAR. You think of him too much.

CLEO. O, 't is treason !

CHAR. Madam, I trust, not so.

CLEO. Thou, eunuch Mardian !

MAR. What 's your highness' pleasure ?

CLEO. Not now to hear thee sing ; I take no pleasure
In aught an eunuch has : 't is well for thee, 10

That, being unseminar'd, thy freer thoughts
May not fly forth of Egypt. Hast thou affections ?

MAR. Yes, gracious madam.

CLEO. Indeed !

MAR. Not in deed, madam ; for I can do nothing
But what indeed is honest to be done :
Yet have I fierce affections, and think
What Venus did with Mars.

CLEO. O Charmian,

Where think'st thou he is now ? Stands he, or sits he ?
Or does he wa'k ? or is he on his horse ? 20

O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony !
Do bravely, horse ! for wot'st thou whom thou movest ?
The demi-Atlas of this earth, the arm
And burgonet of men. He's speaking now,
Or murmuring "Where's my serpent of old Nile ?"

11 *unseminar'd*] emasculated. Shakespeare seems to have coined the word.

23 *The demi-Atlas*] Atlas bears the globe on his shoulders. Antony shares the burden with Octavius.

24 *burgonet*] helmet.

For so he calls me: now I feed myself
With most delicious poison. Think on me,
That am with Phœbus' amorous pinches black
And wrinkled deep in time? Broad-fronted Cæsar,
When thou wast here above the ground, I was 30
A morsel for a monarch: and great Pompey
Would stand and make his eyes grow in my brow;
There would he anchor his aspect and die
With looking on his life.

Enter ALEXAS

ALEX. Sovereign of Egypt, hail!

CLEO. How much unlike art thou Mark Antony!
Yet, coming from him, that great medicine hath
With his tinct gilded thee.
How goes it with my brave Mark Antony?

ALEX. Last thing he did, dear queen,
He kiss'd — the last of many doubled kisses — 40
This orient pearl. His speech sticks in my heart.

CLEO. Mine ear must pluck it thence.

31 *great Pompey*] Cneius Pompeius, son of Pompey the Great, is referred to. Pompey the Great only reached Egypt as a refugee to be slain on landing. Cf. *supra*, I, ii, 183, note.

33 *anchor his aspect*] Cf. *Sonnet cxxxvii*, 5-6: "If eyes . . . Be anchor'd in the bay where all men ride."

36-37 *that great medicine . . . gilded thee*] An allusion to the philosopher's stone, the chemical material or elixir which by its touch was reckoned by alchemists able to convert base metal into gold. Cleopatra attributes alchemical effects of the elixir to association with Antony.

40 *He kiss'd . . . kisses*] He kissed over and over again with doubled and redoubled warmth.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT I

ALEX. "Good friend," quoth he,
 "Say, the firm Roman to great Egypt sends
 This treasure of an oyster; at whose foot,
 To mend the petty present, I will piece
 Her opulent throne with kingdoms; all the east,
 Say thou, shall call her mistress." So he nodded,
 And soberly did mount an arm-gaunt steed,
 Who neigh'd so high, that what I would have spoke
 Was beastly dumb'd by him.

CLEO. What, was he sad or merry? ⁵⁰

ALEX. Like to the time o' the year between the extremes

Of hot and cold, he was nor sad nor merry.

CLEO. O well divided disposition! Note him,
 Note him, good Charmian, 't is the man; but note him:
 He was not sad, for he would shine on those
 That make their looks by his; he was not merry,
 Which seem'd to tell them his remembrance lay
 In Egypt with his joy; but between both.

43 *firm*] constant.

44 *at whose foot*] by way of sequel to that.

45 *piece*] increase, make addition to.

48 *arm-gaunt*] Thus the Folios. Many changes, including *armgirt*, *termagant*, *arrogant*, *rampant*, have been suggested. The context requires that Antony's steed should be highbred, strong, and spirited. "Arm-gaunt" has been strained to imply long service in war which has rendered the animal gaunt. On the whole it seems prudent to reject *arm-gaunt* for *arm-girt*, i. e., caparisoned in armour or warlike equipment.

50 *beastly dumb'd*] was made inaudible by the beast's neighs. Theobald substituted *dumb'd* for *dumbe* of the Folios.

SCENE V ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

O heavenly mingle! Be'st thou sad or merry,
The violence of either thee becomes,

60

So does it no man else. Met'st thou my posts?

ALEX. Ay, madam, twenty several messengers:
Why do you send so thick?

CLEO. Who's born that day
When I forget to send to Antony,
Shall die a beggar. Ink and paper, Charmian.
Welcome, my good Alexas. Did I, Charmian,
Ever love Cæsar so?

CHAR. O that brave Cæsar!

CLEO. Be choked with such another emphasis!
Say, the brave Antony.

CHAR. The valiant Cæsar!

CLEO. By Isis, I will give thee bloody teeth,
If thou with Cæsar paragon again
My man of men.

70

CHAR. By your most gracious pardon,
I sing but after you.

CLEO. My salad days,
When I was green in judgement: cold in blood,

59 *mingle*] combination.

61 *So does it . . . else*] As it does (*i. e.*, becomes) no man else.

63 *thick*] so fast, so quick in succession.

71 *paragon*] compare or parallel.

73-74 *My salad days, . . . judgement*] The punctuation in the Folios placed a comma instead of a colon after *judgement*. In any case Cleopatra is talking interjectionally. She reproaches Charmian for talking of the days of her extreme youth, before her judgment had ripened. There is a coldness of temper in quoting talk of so distant a past.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT I

To say as I said then! But come, away;
Get me ink and paper:
He shall have every day a several greeting,
Or I'll unpeople Egypt. [*Exeunt.*]

77 *several*] separate, individual.

78 *Or I'll unpeople Egypt*] Even if I shall send away as messengers all
my people.

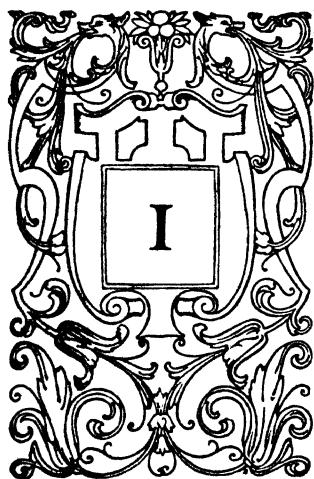


ACT SECOND — SCENE I — MESSINA

POMPEY'S HOUSE

Enter POMPEY, MENECRATES, and MENAS, in warlike manner

POMPEY



IF THE GREAT GODS BE
just, they shall assist
The deeds of justest men.

MENE. Know, worthy Pom-
pey,
That what they do delay, they
not deny.

POM. Whiles we are suitors to
their throne, decays
The thing we sue for.

MENE. We, ignorant of our-
selves,
Beg often our own harms, which
the wise powers

Deny us for our good; so find we profit
By losing of our prayers.

POM. I shall do well:
The people love me, and the sea is mine;

SCENE I ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

That sleep and feeding may prorogue his honour
Even till a Lethe'd dulness!

Enter VARRIUS

How now, Varrius!

VAR. This is most certain that I shall deliver:
Mark Antony is every hour in Rome
Expected: since he went from Egypt 'tis 30
A space for farther travel.

POM. I could have given less matter
A better ear. Menas, I did not think
This amorous surfeiter would have donn'd his helm
For such a petty war: his soldiership
Is twice the other twain: but let us rear
The higher our opinion, that our stirring
Can from the lap of Egypt's widow pluck
The ne'er-lust-wearied Antony.

MEN. I cannot hope
Cæsar and Antony shall well greet together:
His wife that's dead did trespasses to Cæsar; 40

26-27 *may prorogue . . . dulness*] may keep his sense of honour stagnating till it sink into oblivious lethargy.

31 *A space for farther travel*] A space of time has elapsed for a longer journey than that from Egypt to Rome.

35-36 *let us rear . . . opinion, that*] let us hold our reputation in higher esteem seeing that.

37 *Egypt's widow*] Cleopatra had been married at the instance of Julius Cæsar to her brother Ptolemy.

38-39 *I cannot hope . . . together*] I cannot expect Cæsar and Antony to greet each other with much friendliness.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT II

His brother warr'd upon him; although, I think,
Not moved by Antony.

POM. I know not, Menas,
How lesser enmities may give way to greater.
Were 't not that we stand up against them all,
'T were pregnant they should square between them-
selves;

For they have entertained cause enough
To draw their swords: but how the fear of us
May cement their divisions and bind up
The petty difference, we yet not know.
Be 't as our gods will have 't! It only stands
Our lives upon to use our strongest hands.
Come, Menas.

50

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II — ROME

THE HOUSE OF LEPIDUS

Enter ENOBARBUS and LEPIDUS

LEP. Good Enobarbus, 'tis a worthy deed,
And shall become you well, to entreat your captain
To soft and gentle speech.

ENO. I shall entreat him
To answer like himself: if Cæsar move him,
Let Antony look over Cæsar's head

41 *warr'd*] The Second Folio's correction of the First Folio reading *war'd*. Cf. II, ii, 46-47, *infra*: "Your wife and brother Made wars upon me."

45 *'T were pregnant . . . themselves*] It were evident, or obvious, that they should quarrel amongst themselves.

50-51 *It only stands . . . to use*] Our lives wholly depend upon our using.

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

And speak as loud as Mars. By Jupiter,
Were I the wearer of Antonius' beard,
I would not shave 't to-day.

LEP. 'Tis not a time
For private stomaching.

ENO. Every time
Serves for the matter that is then born in't. 10

LEP. But small to greater matters must give way.

ENO. Not if the small come first.

LEP. Your speech is passion:
But, pray you, stir no embers up. Here comes
The noble Antony.

Enter ANTONY and VENTIDIUS

ENO. And yonder, Cæsar.

Enter CÆSAR, MÆCENAS, and AGRIPPA

ANT. If we compose well here, to Parthia
Hark, Ventidius.

CÆS. I do not know,
Mæcenas; ask Agrippa.

LEP. Noble friends,
That which combined us was most great, and let not

7-8 *Were I the wearer . . . to-day*] Were the speaker Antony, he would not show Cæsar the courtesy of making a careful toilet for the meeting. Cf. Enobarbus's description of Antony at line 228, *infra*: "Being barber'd ten times o'er."

9 *stomaching*] quarreling or resentment.

15 *If we compose . . . Parthia*] If we make a satisfactory arrangement here, we must go off to Parthia straightway.

16-17 *I do not know . . . Agrippa*] Cæsar is continuing a conversation with Mæcenas which has begun before their entry.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT II

A leaner action rend us. What 's amiss,
 May it be gently heard: when we debate 20
 Our trivial difference loud, we do commit
 Murder in healing wounds: then, noble partners,
 The rather for I earnestly beseech,
 Touch you the sourest points with sweetest terms,
 Nor curstness grow to the matter.

ANT. 'Tis spoken well.
 Were we before our armies and to fight,
 I should do thus. [Flourish.]

CÆS. Welcome to Rome.

ANT. Thank you.

CÆS. Sit. 30

ANT. Sit, sir.

CÆS. Nay, then.

ANT. I learn, you take things ill which are not so,
 Or being, concern you not.

CÆS. I must be laugh'd at,
 If, or for nothing or a little, I
 Should say myself offended, and with you
 Chiefly i' the world; more laugh'd at, that I should
 Once name you derogately, when to sound your name
 It not concern'd me.

25 *Nor curstness grow to the matter*] Nor let scolding, ill-humoured speech
 be added to the real subject of our difference.

27 *I should do thus*] I should act in the friendly spirit that Lepidus has
 recommended.

30-32 *Sit . . . Nay, then*] Antony with somewhat strained courtesy
 requests Cæsar to seat himself first. Cæsar complies, deprecating
 any discussion on so trifling a point of ceremony.

36 *say myself*] declare myself.

38 *derogately*] disparagingly.

ANT. My being in Egypt, Cæsar,
What was 't to you?

40

CÆS. No more than my residing here at Rome
Might be to you in Egypt: yet, if you there
Did practise on my state, your being in Egypt
Might be my question.

ANT. How intend you, practised?

CÆS. You may be pleased to catch at mine intent
By what did here befall me. Your wife and brother
Made wars upon me, and their contestation
Was theme for you, you were the word of war.

ANT. You do mistake your business; my brother
 never

Did urge me in his act: I did inquire it,
And have my learning from some true reports
That drew their swords with you. Did he not rather
Discredit my authority with yours,
And make the wars alike against my stomach,
Having alike your cause? Of this my letters
Before did satisfy you. If you'll patch a quarrel,
As matter whole you have not to make it with,
It must not be with this.

50

43 *practise on my state*] conspire against my position.

47-48 *their contestation . . . for you*] their quarrel had you for its theme.

The construction is irregular. The context shows that the words do not mean, as their order literally suggests, that the quarrel was the cause of Antony's treasonable activity.

50 *urge me in his act*] use my name by way of justifying his action.

51 *true reports*] true reporters; abstract for concrete.

54-55 *against my stomach . . . your cause*] against the inclination likewise of me who was committed to the same cause as yourself.

56-58 *If you'll patch . . . with this*] If you'll manufacture, or piece out,

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

ENO. Would we had all such wives, that the men
might go to wars with the women! 70

ANT. So much uncurbable, her garboils, Cæsar,
Made out of her impatience, which not wanted
Shrewdness of policy too, I grieving grant
Did you too much disquiet: for that you must
But say, I could not help it.

CÆS. I wrote to you
When rioting in Alexandria; you
Did pocket up my letters, and with taunts
Did gibe my missive out of audience.

ANT. Sir,
He fell upon me ere admitted: then
Three kings I had newly feasted and did want 80
Of what I was i' the morning: but next day
I told him of myself, which was as much
As to have ask'd him pardon. Let this fellow
Be nothing of our strife; if we contend,
Out of our question wipe him.

CÆS. You have broken
The article of your oath, which you shall never
Have tongue to charge me with.

the spirit of my wife, Fulvia, in a wife of your own. Then you
might govern a third part of the world with the ease that you could
guide your horse with the aid of a snaffle, but you could never rule
such a wife with that sort of facility.

70 *with the women*] with the women on their side.

71 *garboils*] tumults, disturbances. Cf. I, iii, 61, *supra*.

78 *gibe my missive*] ridicule my messenger.

79 *fell . . . admitted*] came upon me, before he was formally introduced.

80-81 *did want . . . morning*] was not quite myself in the morning.

LEP. Soft, Cæsar!

ANT. No, Lepidus, let him speak:
The honour is sacred which he talks on now,
Supposing that I lack'd it. But on, Cæsar; 90
The article of my oath.

CÆS. To lend me arms and aid when I required them;
The which you both denied.

ANT. Neglected rather,
And then when poison'd hours had bound me up
From mine own knowledge. As nearly as I may,
I'll play the penitent to you: but mine honesty
Shall not make poor my greatness, nor my power
Work without it. Truth is that Fulvia,
To have me out of Egypt, made wars here;
For which myself, the ignorant motive, do 100
So far ask pardon as befits mine honour
To stoop in such a case.

LEP. 'Tis noble spoken.

MÆC. If it might please you, to enforce no further
The griefs between ye: to forget them quite
Were to remember that the present need
Speaks to atone you.

89-90 *The honour . . . lack'd it*] The theme of honour, my regard for
my oath, which he now speaks of, is a sacred matter, a matter of su-
preme moment, assuming that I committed any breach of my sworn
obligation.

94-95 *when poison'd hours . . . knowledge*] when dissipation had es-
tranged me from a sense of what I owed myself.

98 *without it*] without proper regard for my honesty.

100 *the ignorant motive*] the unconscious and involuntary instigator.

104 *The griefs between ye*] Your grievances against one another.

106 *Speaks to atone you*] Calls for a reconciliation.

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

LEP. Worthily spoken, Mæcenas.

ENO. Or, if you borrow one another's love for the instant, you may, when you hear no more words of Pompey, return it again: you shall have time to wrangle in when you have nothing else to do. 110

ANT. Thou art a soldier only: speak no more.

ENO. That truth should be silent I had almost forgot.

ANT. You wrong this presence; therefore speak no more.

ENO. Go to, then; your considerate stone.

CÆS. I do not much dislike the matter, but
The manner of his speech; for 't cannot be
We shall remain in friendship. our conditions
So differing in their acts. Yet, if I knew
What hoop should hold us stanch, from edge to edge
O' the world I would pursue it.

AGR. Give me leave, Cæsar. 120

CÆS. Speak, Agrippa.

AGR. Thou hast a sister by the mother's side,
Admired Octavia: great Mark Antony
Is now a widower.

114 *your considerate stone*] I will be as silent as a respectful stone; I will be respectfully dumb.

117-118 *our conditions . . . acts*] our natures so different in their workings.

119 *What hoop . . . stanch*] Cf. *2 Hen. IV*, IV, iv, 43-47: "A hoop of gold to bind thy brothers in, That the united vessel of their blood . . . Shall never leak."

122-123 *Thou hast a sister . . . Octavia*] According to Plutarch "Octavia [was] the eldest sister of Cæsar, not by one mother, for she came of Ancharia and Cæsar, himself, afterwards of Accia."

CÆS. Say not so, Agrippa:
If Cleopatra heard you, your reproof
Were well deserved of rashness.

ANT. I am not married, Cæsar: let me hear
Agrippa further speak.

AGR. To hold you in perpetual amity,
To make you brothers and to knit your hearts 134
With an unslipping knot, take Antony
Octavia to his wife; whose beauty claims
No worse a husband than the best of men,
Whose virtue and whose general graces speak
That which none else can utter. By this marriage
All little jealousies which now seem great,
And all great fears which now import their dangers,
Would then be nothing: truths would be tales,
Where now half tales be truths: her love to both
Would each to other and all loves to both 140
Draw after her. Pardon what I have spoke,
For 't is a studied, not a present thought,
By duty ruminated.

ANT. Will Cæsar speak?

CÆS. Not till he hears how Antony is touch'd
With what is spoke already.

125-126 *your reproof . . . rashness*] reproof or rebuke of you were fitly
merited by such rashness. *Reproof* is Hanmer's correction of the
Folio reading *proof*.

137 *which . . . dangers*] which now bring dangers along with them.

138-139 *truths would be tales . . . truths*] true reports of dangerous
jealousies would then be treated as idle tales where as now imperfect
tales of such jealousies pass for full and true reports, and do as much
mischief.

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

ANT. What power is in Agrippa,
If I would say, "Agrippa, be it so,"
To make this good?

CÆS. The power of Cæsar, and
His power unto Octavia.

ANT. May I never
To this good purpose, that so fairly shows,
Dream of impediment! Let me have thy hand: 150
Further this act of grace; and from this hour
The heart of brothers govern in our loves
And sway our great designs!

CÆS. There is my hand.
A sister I bequeath you, whom no brother
Did ever love so dearly: let her live
To join our kingdoms and our hearts; and never
Fly off our loves again!

LEP. Happily, amen!

ANT. I did not think to draw my sword 'gainst
Pompey;
For he hath laid strange courtesies and great
Of late upon me: I must thank him only, 160
Lest my remembrance suffer ill report;
At heel of that, defy him.

LEP. Time calls upon 's:
Of us must Pompey presently be sought,
Or else he seeks out us.

148 *power unto*] power over.

160-162 *I must thank . . . defy him*] I must give him bare thanks lest I
should be condemned for failing to remember benefits. Following
that expression of gratitude, I am prepared to offer him defiance.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT II

ANT. Where lies he?

CÆS. About the Mount Misenum.

ANT. What's his strength
By land?

CÆS. Great and increasing: but by sea
He is an absolute master.

ANT. So is the fame.
Would we had spoke together! Haste we for it:
Yet, ere we put ourselves in arms, dispatch we
The business we have talk'd of.

CÆS. With most gladness; 170
And do invite you to my sister's view,
Whither straight I'll lead you.

ANT. Let us, Lepidus,
Not lack your company.

LEP. Noble Antony,
Not sickness should detain me.

[*Flourish. Exeunt Cæsar, Antony, and Lepidus.*

. MÆC. Welcome from Egypt, sir.

ENO. Half the heart of Cæsar, worthy Mæcenás ! My
honourable friend, Agrippa !

AGR. Good Enobarbus!

MÆC. We have cause to be glad that matters are so well digested. You stayed well by 't in Egypt. 180

165 *Mount Misenum*] A promontory of the Bay of Naples, now named Punta di Miseno.

168 *Would we had spoke together*] Would we had come to close quarters in fight. Cf. II, vi, 24-25, *infra*: "Thou canst not fear us, Pompey, with thy sails; We'll *speak with thee* at sea."

180 *digested*] The First Folio has *disgested*, a form of the word well recognised at the time.

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

ENO. Ay, sir; we did sleep day out of countenance, and made the night light with drinking.

MÆC. Eight wild-boars roasted whole at a breakfast, and but twelve persons there; is this true?

ENO. This was but as a fly by an eagle: we had much more monstrous matter of feast, which worthily deserved noting.

MÆC. She's a most triumphant lady, if report be square to her.

ENO. When she first met Mark Antony, she pursed up his heart, upon the river of Cydnus. 191

AGR. There she appeared indeed, or my reporter devised well for her.

ENO. I will tell you.

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold;
Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were
silver,

Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke and made
The water which they beat to follow faster, 200
As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
It beggar'd all description: she did lie
In her pavilion, cloth-of-gold of tissue,
O'er-picturing that Venus where we see

188-189 *if report be square to her*] if report be fair to her, if report do her justice.

195-209 *The barge . . . undid did*] This description is taken from Plutarch with small verbal changes.

203 *cloth-of-gold of tissue*] plain cloth thickly embroidered with gold. North uses the expression here.

The fancy outwork nature: on each side her
 Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,
 With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
 To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
 And what they undid did.

AGR. O, rare for Antony!

ENO. Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides, 210
 So many mermaids, tended her i' the eyes,
 And made their bends adornings: at the helm
 A seeming mermaid steers: the silken tackle
 Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands,
 That yarely frame the office. From the barge
 A strange invisible perfume hits the sense
 Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast
 Her people out upon her; and Antony,
 Enthroned i' the market-place, did sit alone,

205 *outwork nature*] Cf. *Cymb.*, V, v, 163-165: "for feature, laming The shrine of *Venus*, or straight-pight *Minerva*, Postures beyond brief nature."

208 *glow*] heat, warm; Rowe's correction of the Folio reading *glove*.

210 *Nereides*] sea nymphs who attend on Neptune. North translates Plutarch thus: "the nymphs Nereids (which are the mermaids of the waters)."

211 *tended her i' the eyes*] waited on her every look. Cf. *Hamlet*, IV, iv, 6: "We shall express our duty *in his eye*."

212 *made their bends adornings*] made their obeisances with a grace which added ornament to the scene. These words have been very fully discussed by commentators, and several changes have been suggested. But the general intention is obvious. The succeeding lines emphasise the beautiful effects which were produced by the acts of service rendered by Cleopatra's attendants.

215 *yarely frame the office*] deftly perform the tasks they undertake.

217 *wharfs*] banks. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, v, 33: "*Lethe wharf*."

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Whistling to the air; which, but for vacancy, 220
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,
And made a gap in nature.

AGR. Rare Egyptian!

ENO. Upon her landing, Antony sent to her,
Invited her to supper: she replied,
It should be better he became her guest,
Which she entreated: our courteous Antony,
Whom ne'er the word of "No" woman heard speak,
Being barber'd ten times o'er, goes to the feast,
And, for his ordinary, pays his heart
For what his eyes eat only.

AGR. Royal wench! 230

She made great Cæsar lay his sword to bed:
He plough'd her, and she cropp'd.

ENO. I saw her once
Hop forty paces through the public street;
And having lost her breath, she spoke, and panted,
That she did make defect perfection,
And, breathless, power breathe forth.

MÆC. Now Antony must leave her utterly.

ENO. Never; he will not:

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale

222 *made a gap in nature*] The air feared to create a vacuum, which nature
was currently credited with abhorring.

228 *barber'd ten times o'er*] Cf. lines 7-8, *supra*.

229 *ordinary*] properly a dinner at a tavern, for which there is a fixed
charge.

236 *breathless . . . forth*] out of breath did breathe forth power, did
continue to exert her influence. Thus the old reading. Daniel
ingeniously, but not quite convincingly, substituted *pour breath for*
power breathe.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT II

240

Her infinite variety: other women cloy
 The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
 Where most she satisfies: for vilest things
 Become themselves in her, that the holy priests
 Bless her when she is riggish.

MÆC. If beauty, wisdom, modesty, can settle
 The heart of Antony, Octavia is
 A blessed lottery to him.

AGR. Let us go.
 Good Enobarbus, make yourself my guest
 Whilst you abide here.

ENO. Humbly, sir, I thank you.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III — THE SAME

CÆSAR'S HOUSE

Enter ANTONY, CÆSAR, OCTAVIA *between them, and*
 Attendants

ANT. The world and my great office will sometimes
 Divide me from your bosom.

OCTA. All which time
 Before the gods my knee shall bow my prayers
 To them for you.

ANT. Good night, sir. My Octavia,
 Read not my blemishes in the world's report:
 I have not kept my square; but that to come

244 *riggish*] wanton, immodest.

247 *lottery*] prize.

6 *I have not kept my square*] I have not strictly kept to the path of duty.

SCENE III ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Shall all be done by the rule. Good night, dear lady.
Good night, sir.

CÆS. Good night.

[*Exeunt all but Antony.*]

Enter Soothsayer

ANT. Now, sirrah, you do wish yourself in Egypt? 10

SOOTH. Would I had never come from thence, nor
you thither!

ANT. If you can, your reason?

SOOTH. I see it in my motion, have it not in my
tongue: but yet hie you to Egypt again.

ANT. Say to me, whose fortunes shall rise higher,
Cæsar's or mine?

SOOTH. Cæsar's.

Therefore, O Antony, stay not by his side:

Thy demon, that thy spirit which keeps thee, is 20

Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable,

Where Cæsar's is not; but near him thy angel

11-12 *nor you thither*] nor you had gone thither.

14 *my motion*] my emotion, the movement of my mind. The word is not uncommon in such a sense. The suggested change to *notion* is unnecessary.

20 *Thy demon . . . which keeps thee*] that demon or controlling genius, that spirit of thine which looks after thee. Shakespeare was very familiar with the Greek notion that man's conduct was under the influence of a daimon, or supernatural emissary, who resided in a man's heart. Cf. *Macb.*, III, i, 55-56: "My *Genius* is rebuked, as it is said Mark Antony's was by Cæsar." Cf. North's Plutarch: "*Thy demon*, that is to say, the good angel and *spirit which keepeth thee*."

Becomes a fear, as being o'erpower'd; therefore
Make space enough between you.

ANT. Speak this no more.

SOOTH. To none but thee; no more but when to thee.
If thou dost play with him at any game,
Thou art sure to lose; and, of that natural luck,
He beats thee 'gainst the odds: thy lustre thickens,
When he shines by: I say again, thy spirit
Is all afraid to govern thee near him, 30
But he away, 't is noble.

ANT. Get thee gone:
Say to Ventidius I would speak with him. [*Exit Soothsayer.*]
He shall to Parthia. Be it art or hap,
He hath spoken true: the very dice obey him,
And in our sports my better cunning faints
Under his chance: if we draw lots, he speeds;
His cocks do win the battle still of mine
When it is all to nought, and his quails ever
Beat mine, inhoop'd, at odds. I will to Egypt:
And though I make this marriage for my peace, 40
I' the east my pleasure lies.

23 *Becomes a fear*] Is subject to fear, becomes a thing frightened.

28 *thickens*] becomes dark. Cf. *Mach.*, III, ii, 50: "Light *thickens*."

37-39 *His cocks do win . . . at odds*] Plutarch mentions that Antony and Cæsar indulged in quail-fights as well as in cock-fights and that Antony invariably lost the match. "Inhoop'd" is supposed to refer to the enclosure or ring within which quails, like cocks, fought matches. Cf. Sir John Davies's *Epigrams* (1596): "*Cocking in hoops is now all the play.*"

Enter VENTIDIUS

O, come, Ventidius,
You must to Parthia: your commission's ready;
Follow me, and receive 't. [*Exeunt.*]

[55]

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT II

SCENE V — ALEXANDRIA

CLEOPATRA'S PALACE

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and ALEXAS

CLEO. Give me some music; music, moody food
Of us that trade in love.

ALL. The music, ho!

Enter MARDIAN the Eunuch

CLEO. Let it alone; let 's to billiards: come, Char-
mian.

CHAR. My arm is sore: best play with Mardian.

CLEO. As well a woman with an eunuch play'd
As with a woman. Come, you'll play with me, sir?

MAR. As well as I can, madam.

CLEO. And when good will is show'd, though't come
too short,

The actor may plead pardon. I'll none now:

Give me mine angle; we'll to the river: there, 10

My music playing far off, I will betray

Tawny-finn'd fishes; my bended hook shall pierce

Their slimy jaws, and as I draw them up,

I'll think them every one an Antony,

And say "Ah, ha! you're caught."

CHAR. 'T was merry when

1 *moody*] sad, melancholy

3 *billiards*] This game was familiar to the Elizabethans. Cf. Florio, *Ital.-Engl. Dict.* (1598): "Trucco — a kinde of play with balles upon it, called billiards." Cleopatra's reference to the game is anachronistic.

10 *angle*] fishing-rod.

SCENE V ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

You wager'd on your angling; when your diver
Did hang a salt-fish on his hook, which he
With fervency drew up.

CLEO. That time — O times! —
I laugh'd him out of patience, and that night
I laugh'd him into patience: and next morn,
Ere the ninth hour, I drunk him to his bed;
Then put my tires and mantles on him, whilst
I wore his sword Philippan.

20

Enter a Messenger

O, from Italy!
Ram thou thy fruitful tidings in mine ears,
That long time have been barren.

MESS. Madam, madam, —

CLEO. Antonius dead! If thou say so, villain,
Thou kill'st thy mistress: but well and free,
If thou so yield him, there is gold, and here
My bluest veins to kiss: a hand that kings
Have lipp'd, and trembled kissing.

30

MESS. First, madam, he is well.

CLEO. Why, there's more gold.
But, sirrah, mark, we use
To say the dead are well: bring it to that,
The gold I give thee will I melt and pour
Down thy ill-uttering throat.

22 *tires*] head-dresses.

23 *his sword Philippan*] the sword that Antony wore at Philippi.

33 *well*] at rest, happy. The euphemistic phrase was in common use for
“dead” in Elizabethan English. Cf. *Wint. Tale*, V, i, 30: “Rejoice
the former queen is *well*.”

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT II

MESS. Good madam, hear me.

CLEO. Well, go to, I will;
 But there's no goodness in thy face: if Antony
 Be free and healthful, — so tart a favour
 To trumpet such good tidings! If not well,
 Thou shouldst come like a Fury crown'd with snakes, 40
 Not like a formal man.

MESS. Will 't please you hear me?

CLEO. I have a mind to strike thee ere thou speak'st:
 Yet, if thou say Antony lives, is well,
 Or friends with Cæsar, or not captive to him,
 I'll set thee in a shower of gold, and hail
 Rich pearls upon thee.

MESS. Madam, he's well.

CLEO. Well said.

MESS. And friends with Cæsar.

CLEO. Thou'rt an honest man.

MESS. Cæsar and he are greater friends than ever.

CLEO. Make thee a fortune from me.

MESS. But yet, madam, —

CLEO. I do not like "But yet," it does allay 50
 The good precedence; fie upon "But yet"!
 "But yet" is as a gaoler to bring forth
 Some monstrous malefactor. Prithee, friend,

38 *so tart a favour*] so sour an expression (is not needed). Cleopatra suspects the messenger wears so hangdog a look because he brings ill-tidings.

41 *a formal man*] a man in his senses. See note on *Meas. for Meas.*, V, i, 234.

50–51 *it does allay . . . precedence*] it modifies the pleasurable effect of what precedes.

SCENE V ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Pour out the pack of matter to mine ear,
The good and bad together: he's friends with Cæsar,
In state of health, thou say'st, and thou say'st, free.

MESS. Free, madam! no; I made no such report:
He's bound unto Octavia.

CLEO. For what good turn?

MESS. For the best turn i' the bed.

CLEO. I am pale, Charmian.

MESS. Madam, he's married to Octavia. 60

CLEO. The most infectious pestilence upon thee!
[*Strikes him down.*]

MESS. Good madam, patience.

CLEO. What say you? Hence,
[*Strikes him again.*]

Horrible villain! or I'll spurn thine eyes
Like balls before me; I'll unhair thy head:
[*She hales him up and down.*]

Thou shalt be whipp'd with wire, and stew'd in brine,
Smarting in lingering pickle.

MESS. Gracious madam,
I that do bring the news made not the match.

CLEO. Say 't is not so, a province I will give thee
And make thy fortunes proud: the blow thou hadst
Shall make thy peace for moving me to rage, 70
And I will boot thee with what gift beside
Thy modesty can beg.

MESS. He's married, madam.

CLEO. Rogue, thou hast lived too long. [*Draws a knife.*]

64 unhair thy head] scalp thee.

71 boot thee] endow thee in addition.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT II

MESS. Nay, then, I'll run.
What mean you, madam? I have made no fault. [*Exit.*]

CHAR. Good madam, keep yourself within yourself:
The man is innocent.

CLEO. Some innocents 'scape not the thunderbolt.
Melt Egypt into Nile! and kindly creatures
Turn all to serpents! Call the slave again:
Though I am mad, I will not bite him: call. 80

CHAR. He is afeard to come.

CLEO. I will not hurt him.

[*Exit Charmian.*]

These hands do lack nobility, that they strike
A meaner than myself; since I myself
Have given myself the cause.

Re-enter CHARMIAN and Messenger

Come hither, sir.
Though it be honest, it is never good
To bring bad news: give to a gracious message
An host of tongues, but let ill tidings tell
Themselves when they be felt.

MESS. I have done my duty.

CLEO. Is he married?
I cannot hate thee worser than I do, 90
If thou again say "Yes."

MESS. He 's married, madam.

83-84 *since I myself . . . the cause*] Cleopatra possibly means that she gave Antony the opportunity of his marriage by suffering him to leave her.

SCENE V ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

CLEO. The gods confound thee! dost thou hold there still?

MESS. Should I lie, madam?

CLEO. O, I would thou didst,
So half my Egypt were submerged and made
A cistern for scaled snakes! Go get thee hence:
Hadst thou Narcissus in thy face, to me
Thou wouldst appear most ugly. He is married?

MESS. I crave your highness' pardon.

CLEO. He is married?

MESS. Take no offence that I would not offend
you:

To punish me for what you make me do 100
Seems much unequal: he's married to Octavia.

CLEO. O, that his fault should make a knave of
thee,
That art not what thou'rt sure of! Get thee hence:

92 *hold there still*] keep to that tale.

96 *Narcissus*] the beautiful youth of Greek mythology who loved his own image. Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 161-162: "Narcissus . . . died to kiss his shadow in the brook." Shakespeare has a third reference to Narcissus in *Lucrece*, 265.

97 *Thou wouldst appear most ugly*] Cf. *K. John*, III, i, 37: "This news hath made thee a most ugly man."

99 *Take no offence . . . offend you*] Do not be offended because I am reluctant to offer you offence by answering your question again.

102-103 *O, that his fault . . . sure of!*] This passage is difficult, and none of the many suggested changes give any help. Cleopatra means that Antony's offence makes in Cleopatra's eyes a knave of him who brings the ill-tidings; the messenger, a mere bearer of news, is not identical with the bad news, of the truth of which he is assured.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT II

The merchandise which thou hast brought from Rome
Are all too dear for me: lie they upon thy hand,
And be undone by 'em! [Exit Messenger.]

CHAR. Good your highness, patience.

CLEO. In praising Antony, I have dispraised Cæsar.

CHAR. Many times, madam.

CLEO. I am paid for 't now.

Lead me from hence;

I faint: O Iras, Charmian! 't is no matter.

110

Go to the fellow, good Alexas; bid him

Report the feature of Octavia, her years,

Her inclination; let him not leave out

The colour of her hair: bring me word quickly.

[Exit Alexas.]

Let him for ever go: let him not — Charmian,

Though he be painted one way like a Gorgon,

The other way 's a Mars. [To Mardian] Bid you Alexas

Bring me word how tall she is. Pity me, Charmian,

But do not speak to me. Lead me to my chamber.

[Exeunt.]

104–105 *The merchandise . . . Are*] A noun of multitude taking a plural verb.

105 *lie they upon thy hand*] keep them on your hands without being able to sell them.

112 *feature*] shape, form.

116–117 *Though he be painted . . . a Mars*] An allusion to a duplicate or convertible picture, noticed among others by Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, which may present from one point of view a lion, on the other side a lamb.

SCENE VI ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

SCENE VI—NEAR MISENUM

Flourish, Enter POMPEY and MENAS from one side, with drum and trumpet: at another, CÆSAR, ANTONY, LEPIDUS, ENOBARBUS, MÆCENAS, with Soldiers marching

POM. Your hostages I have, so have you mine;
And we shall talk before we fight.

CÆS. Most meet
That first we come to words; and therefore have we
Our written purposes before us sent;
Which, if thou hast consider'd, let us know
If 't will tie up thy discontented sword
And carry back to Sicily much tall youth
That else must perish here.

POM. To you all three,
The senators alone of this great world,
Chief factors for the gods, I do not know
Wherefore my father should revengers want,
Having a son and friends; since Julius Cæsar,
Who at Philippi the good Brutus ghosted,
There saw you labouring for him. What was 't
That moved pale Cassius to conspire, and what
Made the all-honour'd honest Roman, Brutus,
With the arm'd rest, courtiers of beauteous freedom,

10

10 *factors*] agents.

13 *ghosted*] haunted. Cf. *Cymb.*, II, iii, 139: "I am *sprited* with a fool."

14 *labouring for him*] labouring in behalf of Cæsar, working so as to avenge Cæsar's murder (which in itself went some way to avenge Pompey's ruin).

15 *pale Cassius*] Plutarch credits Cassius with a pallor, which especially moved Julius Cæsar's suspicions.

To drench the Capitol, but that they would
Have one man but a man? And that is it
Hath made me rig my navy, at whose burthen 20
The anger'd ocean foams; with which I meant
To scourge the ingratitude that despitful Rome
Cast on my noble father.

CÆS. Take your time.

ANT. Thou canst not fear us, Pompey, with thy
sails;

We'll speak with thee at sea: at land, thou know'st
How much we do o'ercount thee.

POM. At land indeed
Thou dost o'ercount me of my father's house:
But since the cuckoo builds not for himself,
Remain in 't as thou mayst.

LEP. Be pleased to tell us —
For this is from the present — how you take 30
The offers we have sent you.

CÆS. There's the point.

24 *fear us*] terrify us.

25 *speak with thee*] come to close quarters with thee in fight. Cf. II, ii,
168, *supra*: "Would we had *spoke together*!"

27 *Thou dost o'ercount . . . father's house*] Thou dost overreach me in
respect of my father's house. Antony had bought the fine mansion
in Rome which had belonged to Pompey the Great, father of the
speaker. Cf. II, vii, 126, *infra*. There is a quibble on the word
"o'ercount" which Antony had used (line 26) in the sense of out-
number.

28-29 *But since . . . as thou mayst*] But since like the cuckoo that seizes
other birds' nests, you have occupied a house which was not built for
you, keep it while you can.

30 *from the present*] foreign to the subject in hand.

SCENE VI ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

ANT. Which do not be entreated to, but weigh
What it is worth embraced.

CÆS. And what may follow,
To try a larger fortune.

POM. You have made me offer
Of Sicily, Sardinia; and I must
Rid all the sea of pirates; then, to send
Measures of wheat to Rome; this 'greed upon,
To part with unhack'd edges and bear back
Our targes undinted.

CÆS. }

ANT. }

LEP. }

That's our offer.

POM. Know then,
I came before you here a man prepared
To take this offer: but Mark Antony
Put me to some impatience: though I lose
The praise of it by telling, you must know,
When Cæsar and your brother were at blows,
Your mother came to Sicily and did find
Her welcome friendly.

40

ANT. I have heard it, Pompey,
And am well studied for a liberal thanks
Which I do owe you.

33 *What it is worth embraced*] what acceptance of the offer is worth.

34 *To try a larger fortune*] If you seek to win more from fortune.

37 *'greed*] The first two Folios read *greed*, a regular form of the past
participle of the verb "gree," i. e., assent, settle.

39 *targes*] shields.

45 *Your mother came to Sicily*] Plutarch emphasises this detail.

47 *studied for a liberal thanks*] prepared to give you a full measure of
thanks.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT II

POM. Let me have your hand:
I did not think, sir, to have met you here.

ANT. The beds i' the east are soft; and thanks to you, so
That call'd me timelier than my purpose hither;
For I have gain'd by 't.

CÆS. Since I saw you last,
There is a change upon you.

POM. Well, I know not
What counts harsh fortune casts upon my face;
But in my bosom shall she never come,
To make my heart her vassal.

LEP. Well met here.

POM. I hope so, Lepidus. Thus we are agreed:
I crave our composition may be written
And seal'd between us.

CÆS. That's the next to do.

POM. We'll feast each other ere we part, and let 's 60
Draw lots who shall begin.

ANT. That will I, Pompey.

POM. No. Antony, take the lot:
But, first or last, your fine Egyptian cookery
Shall have the fame. I have heard that Julius Cæsar
Grew fat with feasting there.

ANT. You have heard much.

POM. I have fair meanings, sir.

ANT. And fair words to them.

POM. Then so much have I heard:
And I have heard, Apollodorus carried —

54 counts] marks, lines.

68-70 Apollodorus . . . mattress] According to Plutarch, Cleopatra, on
being driven from Alexandria when Julius Cæsar arrived there,

SCENE VI ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

ENO. No more of that: he did so.

POM. What, I pray you?

ENO. A certain queen to Cæsar in a mattress. 70

POM. I know thee now: how farest thou, soldier?

ENO. Well;

And well am like to do, for I perceive
Four feasts are toward.

POM. Let me shake thy hand;
I never hated thee: I have seen thee fight,
When I have envied thy behaviour.

ENO. Sir,
I never loved you much, but I ha' praised ye
When you have well deserved ten times as much
As I have said you did.

POM. Enjoy thy plainness,
It nothing ill becomes thee.
Aboard my galley I invite you all: 80
Will you lead, lords?

CÆS. }

ANT. }

LEP. }

Show us the way, sir.

POM.

Come.

[Exeunt all but Menas and Enobarbus.]

MEN. *[Aside]* Thy father, Pompey, would ne'er have
made this treaty. — You and I have known, sir.

ENO. At sea, I think.

induced a friendly Sicilian, Apollodorus, to tie her up in a mattress
or flock bed, and to carry her back to the city like a large bundle,
and to deposit her secretly in Julius Cæsar's quarters.

83 *have known*] have made one another's acquaintance.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT II

MEN. We have, sir.

ENO. You have done well by water.

MEN. And you by land.

ENO. I will praise any man that will praise me; though it cannot be denied what I have done by land.

MEN. Nor what I have done by water. 90

ENO. Yes, something you can deny for your own safety: you have been a great thief by sea.

MEN. And you by land.

ENO. There I deny my land service. But give me your hand, Menas: if our eyes had authority, here they might take two thieves kissing.

MEN. All men's faces are true, whatsoe'er their hands are.

ENO. But there is never a fair woman has a true face.

MEN. No slander; they steal hearts.

ENO. We came hither to fight with you. 100

MEN. For my part, I am sorry it is turned to a drinking. Pompey doth this day laugh away his fortune.

ENO. If he do, sure he cannot weep 't back again.

MEN. You've said, sir. We looked not for Mark Antony here: pray you, is he married to Cleopatra?

ENO. Cæsar's sister is called Octavia.

MEN. True, sir; she was the wife of Caius Marcellus.

ENO. But she is now the wife of Marcus Antonius.

97 *All men's faces are true*] Cf. *Macb.*, I, iv, 11-12: "There's no art To find the mind's construction in the face."

99 *No slander . . . hearts*] There is no slander in that remark; fair women are thieves of hearts.

SCENE VI ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

MEN. Pray ye, sir?

ENO. 'T is true.

110

MEN. Then is Cæsar and he for ever knit together.

ENO. If I were bound to divine of this unity, I would not prophesy so.

MEN. I think the policy of that purpose made more in the marriage than the love of the parties.

ENO. I think so too. But you shall find, the band that seems to tie their friendship together will be the very strangler of their amity: Octavia is of a holy, cold and still conversation.

MEN. Who would not have his wife so?

120

ENO. Not he that himself is not so; which is Mark Antony. He will to his Egyptian dish again: then shall the sighs of Octavia blow the fire up in Cæsar; and, as I said before, that which is the strength of their amity shall prove the immediate author of their variance. Antony will use his affection where it is: he married but his occasion here.

MEN. And thus it may be. Come, sir, will you aboard? I have a health for you.

ENO. I shall take it, sir: we have used our throats in Egypt.

131

MEN. Come, let's away.

[*Exeunt.*]

114-115 *I think the policy . . . marriage*] I believe the political ends had a larger hand in making the marriage.

119 *conversation*] behaviour.

127 *occasion*] convenience.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT II

SCENE VII—ON BOARD POMPEY'S GALLEY, OFF MISENUM

Music plays. Enter two or three Servants, with a banquet

FIRST SERV. Here they'll be, man. Some o' their plants are ill-rooted already; the least wind i' the world will blow them down.

SEC. SERV. Lepidus is high-coloured.

FIRST SERV. They have made him drink alms-drink.

SEC. SERV. As they pinch one another by the disposition, he cries out "No more;" reconciles them to his entreaty and himself to the drink.

FIRST SERV. But it raises the greater war between him and his discretion. 10

SEC. SERV. Why, this it is to have a name in great men's fellowship: I had as lief have a reed that will do me no service as a partisan I could not heave.

FIRST SERV. To be called into a huge sphere, and not

SCENE VII (Stage Direction) *a banquet*] the dessert following the great meal.

2 *plants*] humourously used for the soles of the feet, like the Latin "*plantae*."

5 *alms-drink*] dregs, drink offered beggars. Apparently Lepidus has been induced to drink the leavings in his host's glasses in the drunken way of good fellowship.

6-7 *As they pinch . . . disposition*] As they press one another to drink to the full extent of each one's ability, as they invite one another to drink, in the way of challenging their prowess as toppers. "Pinch" has much the same significance as in the common phrase "*to pinch courtesy*," *i. e.*, to strain ceremony. There seems small authority for giving "pinch" here the sense of "banter" or "twit."

13 *partisan*] halberd.

SCENE VII ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

to be seen to move in 't, are the holes where eyes should be, which pitifully disaster the cheeks.

A sennet sounded. Enter CÆSAR, ANTONY, LEPIDUS, POMPEY, AGRIPPA, MÆCENAS, ENOBARBUS, MENAS, with other captains

ANT. [*To Cæsar*] Thus do they, sir: they take the flow
o' the Nile

By certain scales i' the pyramid; they know,
By the height, the lowness, or the mean, if dearth
Or foison follow: the higher Nilus swells,
The more it promises: as it ebbs, the seedsman
Upon the slime and ooze scatters his grain,
And shortly comes to harvest.

LEP. You've strange serpents there.

ANT. Ay, Lepidus.

LEP. Your serpent of Egypt is bred now of your mud
by the operation of your sun: so is your crocodile.

ANT. They are so.

POM. Sit, — and some wine! A health to Lepidus!

LEP. I am not so well as I should be, but I'll ne'er
out.

16 *disaster the cheeks*] disfigure, destroy the cheeks (in the absence of eyes). Cf. *Rich. III*, I, iv, 29–31: “in *those holes* *Where eyes* did once inhabit, there were crept, As 't were in scorn of eyes, reflecting gems.”

(Stage Direction) *A sennet*] A set of notes on the trumpet.

18 *By certain . . . pyramid*] Marks were scratched on the Pyramids to indicate the height of the river Nile at full tide.

20 *foison*] abundance. The word is French.

30 *I'll ne'er out*] Lepidus appears to mean that he will not leave the party. Enobarbus in the next line takes his words to mean that he will never be free of the effects of this debauch.

ENO. Not till you have slept; I fear me you'll be in till then.

LEP. Nay, certainly, I have heard the Ptolemies' pyramises are very goodly things; without contradiction, I have heard that.

MEN. [*Aside to Pom.*] Pompey, a word.

POM. [*Aside to Men.*] Say in mine ear: what is 't?

MEN. [*Aside to Pom.*] Forsake thy seat, I do beseech thee, captain,

And hear me speak a word.

POM. [*Aside to Men.*] Forbear me till anon. —
This wine for Lepidus!

LEP. What manner o' thing is your crocodile? 40

ANT. It is shaped, sir, like itself; and it is as broad as it hath breadth: it is just so high as it is, and moves with it own organs: it lives by that which nourisheth it; and the elements once out of it, it transmigrates.

LEP. What colour is it of?

ANT. Of it own colour too.

LEP. 'T is a strange serpent.

ANT. 'T is so. And the tears of it are wet.

CÆS. Will this description satisfy him?

ANT. With the health that Pompey gives him, else 50
he is a very epicure.

31 *you'll be in*] you'll be under the influence of drink.

33-34 *pyramises*] Lepidus' drunken plural of "pyramis" instead of the correct "pyramides" which is found in V, ii, 61, *infra*. "Pyramis" was commonly used in Elizabethan English for "pyramid," in agreement with classical usage.

43 *it own organs*] "it" is the old form of "its." Cf. line 46: "*it own colour*."

SCENE VII. ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

POM. [*Aside to Men.*] Go hang, sir, hang! Tell me of that? away!

Do as I bid you. — Where's this cup I call'd for?

MEN. [*Aside to Pom.*] If for the sake of merit thou wilt hear me,

Rise from thy stool.

POM. [*Aside to Men.*] I think thou'rt mad. The matter?
[*Rises, and walks aside.*]

MEN. I have ever held my cap off to thy fortunes.

POM. Thou hast served me with much faith. What's else to say?

Be jolly, lords.

ANT. These quick-sands, Lepidus,
Keep off them, for you sink.

MEN. Wilt thou be lord of all the world?

POM. What say'st thou? ⁶⁰

MEN. Wilt thou be lord of the whole world? That's twice.

POM. How should that be?

MEN. But entertain it,
And, though thou think me poor, I am the man
Will give thee all the world.

POM. Hast thou drunk well?

MEN. No, Pompey, I have kept me from the cup.
Thou art, if thou darest be, the earthly Jove:
Whate'er the ocean pales, or sky inclips,
Is thine, if thou wilt ha't.

POM. Show me which way.

⁶⁷ *Whate'er . . . sky inclips*] Whatever the ocean surrounds (with its palings) or the sky embraces.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT II

MEN. These three world-sharers, these competitors,
Are in thy vessel: let me cut the cable; 70
And, when we are put off, fall to their throats:
All there is thine.

POM. Ah, this thou shouldst have done,
And not have spoke on 't! In me 't is villany;
In thee 't had been good service. Thou must know,
'T is not my profit that does lead mine honour;
Mine honour, it. Repent that e'er thy tongue
Hath so betray'd thine act: being done unknown,
I should have found it afterwards well done,
But must condemn it now. Desist, and drink.

MEN. [*Aside*] For this 80
I'll never follow thy pall'd fortunes more.
Who seeks, and will not take when once 't is offer'd,
Shall never find it more.

POM. This health to Lepidus!

ANT. Bear him ashore. I'll pledge it for him, Pompey.

ENO. Here 's to thee, Menas!

MEN. Enobarbus, welcome!

POM. Fill till the cup be hid.

ENO. There's a strong fellow, Menas.

[Pointing to the Attendant who carries off Lepidus.]

MEN. Why?

ENO. A' bears the third part of the world, man;
see 'st not?

72 *All there is thine*] The speaker points to Antony and Cæsar.

76 *Mine honour, it*] My honour comes before my profit. My profit is not
a primary consideration.

81 *thy pall'd fortunes*] thy drooping, impaired fortunes.

SCENE VII ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

MEN. The third part then is drunk : would it were all, 90
That it might go on wheels !

ENO. Drink thou ; increase the reels.

MEN. Come.

POM. This is not yet an Alexandrian feast.

ANT. It ripens towards it. Strike the vessels, ho !
Here 's to Cæsar !

CÆS. I could well forbear 't.
It 's monstrous labour, when I wash my brain
And it grows fouler.

ANT. Be a child o' the time.

CÆS. Possess it, I'll make answer :
But I had rather fast from all four days 100
Than drink so much in one.

ENO. [To Antony] Ha, my brave emperor !
Shall we dance now the Egyptian Bacchanals,
And celebrate our drink ?

POM. Let 's ha 't, good soldier.

ANT. Come, let 's all take hands,
Till that the conquering wine hath steep'd our sense
In soft and delicate Lethe.

91 *go on wheels*] whirl round, change its course. The expression "The world runs on wheels" was a colloquialism for topsyturvydom.

92 *increase the reels*] The general sense is "increase the tipsy merriment, keep up the fun." "Reels" which is suggested by Menas' mention of "wheels" refers to the dances of that name, which are marked by giddy movement. Cf. Enobarbus' suggestion of a dance, line 110, *infra*.

95 *Strike the vessels*] Broach the casks. Cf. Fletcher's *Monsieur Thomas*, Act V, Sc. x: "Home Launce and *strike* a fresh piece of wine."

98 *Be a child o' the time.*] Comply with the humour of the minute.

99 *Possess it*] Be master of the season, make it subservient.

ENO. All take hands.
 Make battery to our ears with the loud music:
 The while I 'll place you: then the boy shall sing;
 The holding every man shall bear as loud
 As his strong sides can volley. 110
[Music plays. Enobarbus places them hand in hand.]

THE SONG.

Come, thou monarch of the vine,
 Plumpy Bacchus with pink eyne!
 In thy fats our cares be drown'd,
 With thy grapes our hairs be crown'd:
 Cup us, till the world go round,
 Cup us, till the world go round!

CÆS. What would you more? Pompey, good night.
 Good brother,
 Let me request you off: our graver business

109 *holding*] burden or chorus.

bear] Theobald's correction of the Folio reading *beat*. "To *bear* the burden," *i. e.*, "to join in the chorus," was a common phrase of the day. Yet *beat* harmonises with the speaker's injunction to "make *battery* to our ears" in line 107, and may mean "strike up." Cf. *Hen. VIII*, I, iv, 108: "Let the music *knock* it."

112 *pink eyne*] "pink" is an epithet commonly applied to small eyes, half-shut eyes.

113 *fats*] an old form of "vats."

118 *you off: our*] Rowe's doubtful correction of the somewhat difficult Folio reading *you of our* which gives, however, the sense: "Let me make inquiry of you about our graver business, which frowns at this levity."

SCENE VII ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Frowns at this levity. Gentle lords, let 's part;
 You see we have burnt our cheeks: strong Enobarb 120
 Is weaker than the wine; and mine own tongue
 Splits what it speaks: the wild disguise hath almost
 Antick'd us all. What needs more words? Good night.
 Good Antony, your hand.

POM. I 'll try you on the shore.

ANT. And shall, sir: give 's your hand.

POM. O Antony,
 You have my father's house, — But, what? we are
 friends.

Come, down into the boat.

ENO. Take heed you fall not.

[*Exeunt all but Enobarbus and Menas.*]

Menas, I'll not on shore.

MEN. No, to my cabin.

These drums! these trumpets, flutes! what!

Let Neptune hear we bid a loud farewell 130

To these great fellows: sound and be hang'd, sound out!

[*Sound a flourish, with drums.*]

ENO. Hoo! says a'. There 's my cap.

MEN. Hoo! Noble captain, come. [*Exeunt.*]

122-123 *the wild disguise . . . Antick'd us all*] this mad disguise of
 liquor has almost made all of us buffoons.

124 *I 'll try you*] I 'll make trial of your hospitality.

126 *my father's house*] Cf. II, vi, 27, *supra*.

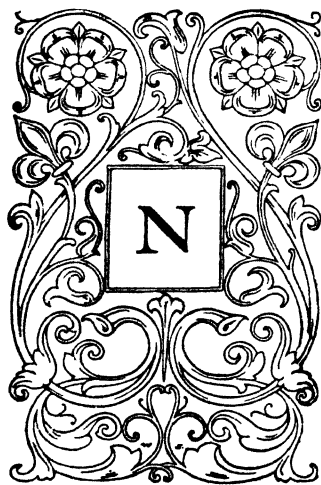


ACT THIRD — SCENE I

A PLAIN IN SYRIA

Enter VENTIDIUS as it were in triumph, with SILIUS, and other Romans, Officers, and Soldiers; the dead body of PACORUS borne before him

VENTIDIUS



NOW, DARTING PARTHIA,
art thou struck; and now
Pleased fortune does of Marcus
Crassus' death •

Make me revenger. Bear the
king's son's body
Before our army. Thy Paco-
rus, Orodes,
Pays this for Marcus Crassus.

SIL. Noble Ventidius,
Whilst yet with Parthian blood
thy sword is warm,
The fugitive Parthians follow;
spur through Media,

Mesopotamia, and the shelters whither
The routed fly: so thy grand captain Antony

SCENE I ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Shall set thee on triumphant chariots and 10
Put garlands on thy head.

VEN. O Silius, Silius,
I have done enough: a lower place, note well,
May make too great an act; for learn this, Silius,
Better to leave undone than by our deed
Acquire too high a fame when him we serve 's away.
Cæsar and Antony have ever won
More in their officer than person: Sossius,
One of my place in Syria his lieutenant,
For quick accumulation of renown,
Which he achieved by the minute, lost his favour. 20
Who does it the wars more than his captain can
Becomes his captain's captain: and ambition,
The soldier's virtue, rather makes choice of loss
Than gain which darkens him.
I could do more to do Antonius good,

1-5 *Now, darting Parthia . . . Marcus Crassus*] Parthia was famed for the skill of her horsed bowmen, who, while they pretended to be flying, would dart backwards on their foe showers of arrows. Cf. IV, xiv, 70: "Parthian darts." Ventidius' decisive defeat of the Parthians and slaughter of the Parthian king Pacorus took place in B. C. 39, precisely fourteen years after King Pacorus' father Orodes had destroyed the Roman general Marcus Crassus and a great Roman army. (See Plutarch's *Life of Marcus Crassus*.)

12-13 *a lower place . . . an act*] Ventidius means that a lieutenant may get more glory than becomes his station.

15 *when him . . . away*] when he whom we serve is away.

16-17 *Cæsar and Antony . . . person*] Cæsar and Antony have always gained greater victories through the action of their officers or lieutenants than through their personal services. Cf. III, xi, 39, *infra*.

24 *gain which darkens him*] gain that which puts the captain in the shade.

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

The other three are sealing. Octavia weeps
To part from Rome; Cæsar is sad, and Lepidus
Since Pompey's feast, as Menas says, is troubled
With the green sickness.

AGR. 'T is a noble Lepidus.

ENO. A very fine one: O, how he loves Cæsar!

AGR. Nay, but how dearly he adores Mark Antony!

ENO. Cæsar? Why, he's the Jupiter of men.

AGR. What's Antony? The god of Jupiter. 10

ENO. Spake you of Cæsar? How! the nonpareil!

AGR. O Antony! O thou Arabian bird!

ENO. Would you praise Cæsar, say "Cæsar": go no
further.

AGR. Indeed, he plied them both with excellent
praises.

ENO. But he loves Cæsar best; yet he loves Antony:
Ho! hearts, tongues, figures, scribes, bards, poets, can-
not

Think, speak, cast, write, sing, number — ho! —
His love to Antony. But as for Cæsar,
Kneel down, kneel down, and wonder.

3 *sealing*] signing the agreements.

6 *the green sickness*] an anæmic complaint from which young girls in love
often suffer. Enobarbus is ridiculing Lepidus' imbecile affection
for Cæsar and Antony.

11 *nonpareil*] the paragon.

12 *thou Arabian bird*] the phoenix. Cf. *Cymb.*, I, vi, 17: "She is alone *the Arabian bird*."

16 *figures*] Hanmer's correction of the Folio *figure*. The word often
means "figurative imagery," but its association with the verb "cast"
in the next line suggests a quibbling allusion to "figure-casters," or
arithmeticians.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT III

AGR. Both he loves.

ENO. They are his shards, and he their beetle.

[Trumpet within.] So; 20

This is to horse. Adieu, noble Agrippa.

AGR. Good fortune, worthy soldier, and farewell.

Enter CÆSAR, ANTONY, LEPIDUS, and OCTAVIA

ANT. No further, sir.

CÆS. You take from me a great part of myself;
Use me well in 't. Sister, prove such a wife
As my thought's make thee, and as my farthest band
Shall pass on thy approof. Most noble Antony,
Let not the piece of virtue which is set
Betwixt us as the cement of our love,
To keep it builded, be the ram to batter 30
The fortress of it; for better might we
Have loved without this mean, if on both parts
This be not cherish'd.

ANT. Make me not offended
In your distrust.

CÆS. I have said.

ANT. You shall not find,
Though you be therein curious, the least cause

20 *shards*] the cases which hold the beetle's wings and which open before the wings expand. Cf. *Cymb.*, III, iii, 20: "The *sharded* beetle."

26-27 *as my farthest band . . . approof*] such that my strongest pledge, my utmost venture or stake, shall be confirmed by the trial of thy conduct. Cæsar means that he is ready to stake everything on his sister's proving herself a perfect wife.

28 *the piece of virtue*] the perfection of virtue. Cf. *Tempest*, I, ii, 56: "Thy mother was a *piece of virtue*."

35 *curious*] over-punctilious, over-careful.

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

For what you seem to fear: so, the gods keep you,
And make the hearts of Romans serve your ends!
We will here part.

CÆS. Farewell, my dearest sister, fare thee well:
The elements be kind to thee, and make
Thy spirits all of comfort! fare thee well.

40

OCTA. My noble brother!

ANT. The April's in her eyes: it is love's spring,
And these the showers to bring it on. Be cheerful.

OCTA. Sir, look well to my husband's house, and —

CÆS. What,

Octavia?

OCTA. I'll tell you in your ear.

ANT. Her tongue will not obey her heart, nor can
Her heart inform her tongue, the swan's down-feather,
That stands upon the swell at full of tide
And neither way inclines.

50

ENO. [*Aside to Agr.*] Will Cæsar weep?

AGR. [*Aside to Eno.*] He has a cloud in 's face.

ENO. [*Aside to Agr.*] He were the worse for that, were
he a horse;
So is he, being a man.

40 *The elements*] Nature in all its aspects.

47-50 *Her tongue . . . inclines*] Octavia's affections are equally divided
between her brother and her husband, and can in her heart give neither
the advantage.

51 *He has a cloud in 's face*] He has a look of gloom.

52 *were he a horse*] a horse, which lacked all sign of white on its fore-
head, was technically said among stablemen to have "a cloud in the
face" i. e., to be of sullen disposition.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT III

AGR. [*Aside to Eno.*] Why, Enobarbus,
When Antony found Julius Cæsar dead,
He cried almost to roaring; and he wept
When at Philippi he found Brutus slain.

ENO. [*Aside to Agr.*] That year indeed he was troubled
with a rheum;
What willingly he did confound he wail'd,
Believe 't, till I wept too.

CÆS. No, sweet Octavia,
You shall hear from me still; the time shall not
Out-go my thinking on you.

ANT. Come, sir, come;
I'll wrestle with you in my strength of love:
Look, here I have you; thus I let you go,
And give you to the gods.

CÆS. Adieu; be happy!

LEP. Let all the number of the stars give light
To thy fair way!

CÆS. Farewell, farewell! [*Kisses Octavia.*]

ANT. Farewell!

[*Trumpets sound. Exeunt.*]

57 *a rheum*] a cold in the head, which made his eyes water.

58 *confound*] destroy or ruin.

SCENE III ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

SCENE III — ALEXANDRIA

CLEOPATRA'S PALACE

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and ALEXAS

CLEO. Where is the fellow?

ALEX. Half afeard to come.

CLEO. Go to, go to.

Enter Messenger

Come hither, sir.

ALEX. Good majesty.

Herod of Jewry dare not look upon you
But when you are well pleased.

CLEO. That Herod's head
I'll have: but how, when Antony is gone
Through whom I might command it? Come thou near.

MESS. Most gracious majesty, —

CLEO. Didst thou behold
Octavia?

MESS. Ay, dread queen.

CLEO. Where?

MESS. Madam, in Rome
I look'd her in the face, and saw her led
Between her brother and Mark Antony.

10

3 *Herod of Jewry*] Usually cited in Elizabethan literature as a type of ferocious tyranny, Herod being a familiar character in the mystery plays. (Cf. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 13.) Cleopatra in the next line takes the reference to apply to the historic Herod the Great; cf. "Great Herod," IV, vi, 14, *infra*.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT III

CLEO. Is she as tall as me?

MESS. She is not, madam.

CLEO. Didst hear her speak? is she shrill-tongued
or low?

MESS. Madam, I heard her speak; she is low-voiced.

CLEO. That 's not so good. He cannot like her long.

CHAR. Like her! O Isis! 't is impossible.

CLEO. I think so, Charmian: dull of tongue and
dwarfish.

What majesty is in her gait? Remember,
If e'er thou look'dst on majesty.

MESS. She creeps:
Her motion and her station are as one;
She shows a body rather than a life,
A statue than a breather.

20

CLEO. Is this certain?

MESS. Or I have no observance.

CHAR. Three in Egypt
Cannot make better note.

CLEO. He 's very knowing;
I do perceive 't: there's nothing in her yet:
The fellow has good judgement.

CHAR. Excellent.

CLEO. Guess at her years, I prithee.

13-14 *she is low-voiced . . . like her long*] A low voice in a woman is "not so good" from Cleopatra's jealous point of view as a shrill tongue. But in any case Cleopatra consoles herself with the thought that Antony's affection for Octavia will be short-lived.

19 *Her motion and her station*] Her movement and her standing still are indistinguishable; an extravagant way of saying that she is extremely sluggish in her movements.

21 *a breather*] a living person.

SCENE III ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

MESS. Madam,
 She was a widow —
 CLEO. Widow! Charmian, hark.
 MESS. And I do think she's thirty.
 CLEO. Bear'st thou her face in mind? is 't long or
 round?
 MESS. Round even to faultiness. 30
 CLEO. For the most part, too, they are foolish that
 are so.
 Her hair, what colour?
 MESS. Brown, madam: and her forehead
 As low as she would wish 't.
 CLEO. There's gold for thee.
 Thou must not take my former sharpness ill:
 I will employ thee back again; I find thee
 Most fit for business: go make thee ready;
 Our letters are prepared. [Exit Messenger.
 CHAR. A proper man.
 CLEO. Indeed, he is so: I repent me much
 That so I harried him. Why, methinks, by him,
 This creature's no such thing.
 CHAR. Nothing, madam. 40
 CLEO. The man hath seen some majesty, and should
 know.
 CHAR. Hath he seen majesty? Isis else defend,
 And serving you so long!

33 *As low . . . wish it*] So low that she could not wish it lower. A low forehead was reckoned a deformity. Cf. *Tempest*, IV, i, 247-248: "apes With foreheads villanous low."

42 *Isis else defend*] God forbid.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT III

CLEO. I have one thing more to ask him yet, good Charmian:

But 't is no matter; thou shalt bring him to me
Where I will write. All may be well enough.

CHAR. I warrant you, madam. [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV — ATHENS

A ROOM IN ANTONY'S HOUSE

Enter ANTONY and OCTAVIA

ANT. Nay, nay, Octavia, not only that,
That were excusable, that and thousands more
Of semblable import, but he hath waged
New wars 'gainst Pompey; made his will, and read it
To public ear:

Spoke scantily of me: when perforce he could not
But pay me terms of honour, cold and sickly
He vented them; most narrow measure lent me;
When the best hint was given him, he not took 't,
Or did it from his teeth.

OCTA. O my good lord,
Believe not all; or, if you must believe,

10

3 *Of semblable import*] Of like purport, to the same effect.

6 *scantily*] grudgingly, slightly.

9 *he not took 't*] Theobald's emendation of the First Folio's awkward reading *he not look 't*, which has been defended as meaning that Cæsar did not face squarely the best hint or opportunity. The later Folios read, quite *impossibly*, *he had lookt*.

10 *from his teeth*] insincerely, with the merest formality. The phrase is common.

SCENE IV ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Stomach not all. A more unhappy lady,
 If this division chance, ne'er stood between,
 Praying for both parts:
 The good gods will mock me presently,
 When I shall pray, "O, bless my lord and husband!"
 Undo that prayer, by crying out as loud,
 "O, bless my brother!" Husband win, win brother,
 Prays, and destroys the prayer; no midway
 'Twixt these extremes at all.

ANT. Gentle Octavia, 20
 Let your best love draw to that point, which seeks
 Best to preserve it; if I lose mine honour,
 I lose myself: better I were not yours
 Than yours so branchless. But, as you requested,
 Yourself shall go between's: the mean time, lady,
 I'll raise the preparation of a war
 Shall stain your brother: make your soonest haste;
 So your desires are yours.

OCTA. Thanks to my lord.
 The Jove of power make me most weak, most weak,
 Your reconciler! Wars 'twixt you twain would be 30
 As if the world should cleave, and that slain men
 Should solder up the rift.

ANT. When it appears to you where this begins,
 Turn your displeasure that way; for our faults
 Can never be so equal, that your love
 Can equally move with them. Provide your going;

12 *Stomach*] Resent, show anger at.

27 *stain your brother*] bring your brother within risk of dishonour. Antony is irritated and is not using very polite language.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT III

Choose your own company, and command what cost
Your heart has mind to. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE V — THE SAME

ANOTHER ROOM

Enter ENOBARBUS and EROS, meeting

ENO. How now, friend Eros!

EROS. There 's strange news come, sir.

ENO. What, man?

EROS. Cæsar and Lepidus have made wars upon
Pompey.

ENO. This is old: what is the success?

EROS. Cæsar, having made use of him in the wars
'gainst Pompey, presently denied him rivalry; would
not let him partake in the glory of the action: and not
resting here, accuses him of letters he had formerly ¹⁰
wrote to Pompey; upon his own appeal, seizes him: so
the poor third is up, till death enlarge his confine.

ENO. Then, world, thou hast a pair of chaps, no more;
And throw between them all the food thou hast,
They'll grind the one the other. Where 's Antony?

EROS. He 's walking in the garden — thus; and
spurns
The rush that lies before him; cries "Fool Lepidus!"

6 *success*] result, consequence.

8 *rivalry*] partnership, equality of power.

12 *is up*] is done for; as in the phrase "The game is up."

13 *world, thou hast*] Hanmer's ingenious correction of the Folio reading
would thou hadst.

chaps] jaws.

SCENE VI ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

And threatens the throat of that his officer
That murder'd Pompey.

ENO. Our great navy's rigg'd.

EROS. For Italy and Cæsar. More, Domitius; 20
My lord desires you presently: my news
I might have told hereafter.

ENO. 'T will be naught:
But let it be. Bring me to Antony.

EROS. Come, sir. [Exeunt.]

SCENE VI — ROME

CÆSAR'S HOUSE

Enter CÆSAR, AGRIPPA, and MÆCENAS

CÆS. Contemning Rome, he has done all this, and
more,

In Alexandria: here 's the manner of 't:
I' the market-place, on a tribunal silver'd
Cleopatra and himself in chairs of gold
Were publicly enthroned: at the feet sat
Cæsarion, whom they call my father's son,
And all the unlawful issue that their lus'
Since then hath made between them. Unto her
He gave the stablishment of Egypt; made her
Of lower Syria, Cyprus, Lydia, 10
Absolute queen.

22 'T will be naught] The event will come to nothing.

6 Cæsarion . . . my father's son] Julius Cæsar, who was father of
Cæsarion by Cleopatra (cf. III, xiii, 162, *infra*), had adopted
Octavius Cæsar his grand-nephew as his son.

10 Lydia] According to Plutarch's text *Libya*, part of Africa, should be

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT III

MÆC. This in the public eye?

CÆS. I' the common show-place, where they exercise.
His sons he there proclaim'd the kings of kings:
Great Media, Parthia and Armenia
He gave to Alexander; to Ptolemy he assign'd
Syria, Cilicia and Phœnicia: she
In the habiliments of the goddess Isis
That day appear'd, and oft before gave audience,
As 't is reported, so.

MÆC. Let Rome be thus
Inform'd.

AGR. Who, queasy with his insolence 20
Already, will their good thoughts call from him.

CÆS. The people know it, and have now received
His accusations.

AGR. Who does he accuse?

CÆS. Cæsar: and that, having in Sicily
Sextus Pompeius spoil'd, we had not rated him
His part o' the isle: then does he say, he lent me
Some shipping unrestored: lastly, he frets
That Lepidus of the triumvirate
Should be deposed; and, being, that we detain
All his revenue.

AGR. Sir, this should be answer'd. 30

read here. Cleopatra's rule never extended to Lydia, a region of Asia Minor. Bocchus, King of Libya, one of Cleopatra's subject kings, is mentioned, III, vii, 69, *infra*.

20 *queasy*] sick, nauseated.

25 *rated*] allotted.

29 *being*] that being so.

SCENE VI ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

CÆS. 'T is done already, and the messenger gone.
I have told him, Lepidus was grown too cruel;
That he his high authority abused
And did deserve his change: for what I have conquer'd,
I grant him part; but then, in his Armenia
And other of his conquer'd kingdoms, I
Demand the like.

MÆC. He 'll never yield to that.

CÆS. Nor must not then be yielded to in this.

Enter OCTAVIA, with her train

OCTA. Hail, Cæsar, and my lord! hail, most dear
Cæsar!

CÆS. That ever I should call thee castaway! 40

OCTA. You have not call'd me so, nor have you cause.

CÆS. Why have you stol'n upon us thus? You come
not

Like Cæsar's sister: the wife of Antony
Should have an army for an usher, and
The neighs of horse to tell of her approach
Long ere she did appear; the trees by the way
Should have borne men; and expectation fainted,
Longing for what it had not; nay, the dust
Should have ascended to the roof of heaven,
Raised by your populous troops: but you are come 50
A market-maid to Rome; and have prevented
The ostentation of our love, which, left unshown,

52 *ostentation*] manifestation. "Ostent" is more commonly found in such
a sense. "Ostentation" makes the line an Alexandrine.

52-53 *love . . . unloved*] love, the leaving of which unshown has often

Is often left unloved: we should have met you
By sea and land, supplying every stage
With an augmented greeting.

OCTA. Good my lord,
To come thus was I not constrain'd, but did it
On my free will. My lord, Mark Antony,
Hearing that you prepared for war, acquainted
My grieved ear withal; whereon, I begg'd
His pardon for return.

CÆS. Which soon he granted, 60
Being an obstruct 'tween his lust and him.

OCTA. Do not say so, my lord.

CÆS. I have eyes upon him,
And his affairs come to me on the wind.
Where is he now?

OCTA. My lord, in Athens

CÆS. No, my most wronged sister; Cleopatra
Hath nodded him to her. He hath given his empire
Up to a whore; who now are levying
The kings o' the earth for war: he hath assembled
Bocchus, the king of Libya; Archelaus,

the effect of depriving of its value. The context gives "unloved"
the meaning of "unvalued."

61 *obstruct*] Theobald's change of the Folio reading *abstract*. But "ab-
stract" in the sense of "abbreviation" or "abridgment" is well
known to Elizabethan English and may be right here.

62 *eyes*] spies.

67 *who now are*] Antony and Cleopatra are jointly the subject of
"who."

69-76 *Bocchus . . . list of sceptres*] This list is taken with very slight
alteration from Plutarch.

SCENE VI ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Of Cappadocia; Philadelphos, king 70
 Of Paphlagonia; the Thracian king, Adallas;
 King Malchus of Arabia; King of Pont;
 Herod of Jewry; Mithridates, king
 Of Comagene; Polemon and Amyntas,
 The kings of Mede and Lycaonia,
 With a more larger list of sceptres.

OCTA. Ay me, most wretched,
 That have my heart parted betwixt two friends
 That do afflict each other!

CÆS. Welcome hither:
 Your letters did withhold our breaking forth,
 Till we perceived both how you were wrong led 80
 And we in negligent danger. Cheer your heart:
 Be you not troubled with the time, which drives
 O'er your content these strong necessities;
 But let determined things to destiny
 Hold unbewail'd their way. Welcome to Rome;
 Nothing more dear to me. You are abused
 Beyond the mark of thought: and the high gods,
 To do you justice, make them ministers

72-74 *King of Pont . . . Polemon*] According to Plutarch, these were names of one person, Polemon being King of Pont. Plutarch's "King of Medes" was a different person.

74-75 *Amyntas . . . Lycaonia*] According to Plutarch, Amyntas was "King of Lycaonia and of the Galatians."

81 *negligent danger*] danger from negligence.

84 *determined things to destiny*] things determined or already fixed by destiny.

88 *make them*] Thus Capell. The Folios read *makes his*, or *make his*,

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT III

Of us and those that love you. Best of comfort;
And ever welcome to us.

AGR. Welcome, lady.

90

MÆC. Welcome, dear madam.

Each heart in Rome does love and pity you:
Only the adulterous Antony, most large
In his abominations, turns you off;
And gives his potent regiment to a trull,
That noises it against us.

OCTA. Is it so, sir?

CÆS. Most certain. Sister, welcome: pray you,
Be ever known to patience: my dear'st sister!

SCENE VII — NEAR ACTIUM

ANTONY'S CAMP

Enter CLEOPATRA and ENOBARBUS

CLEO. I will be even with thee, doubt it not.

ENO. But why, why, why?

CLEO Thou hast forspoke my being in these wars,
And say'st it is not fit.

ENO. Well, is it, is it?

CLEO. If not denounced against us, why should not we
Be there in person?

which seems a false concord for "make their." *Make them* gives the best sense.

95-96 *gives . . . against us*] gives his powerful authority or sway to a harlot, that rouses loud voice of opposition to us.

3 *forspoke*] gainsaid, argued against.

5 *If not denounced against us*] If there be no special interdict pronounced against our presence in the field. The Folios place a comma after *not*.

SCENE VII ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

ENO. [Aside] Well, I could reply:
If we should serve with horse and mares together,
The horse were merely lost; the mares would bear
A soldier and his horse.

CLEO. What is 't you say?

ENO. Your presence needs must puzzle Antony; 10
Take from his heart, take from his brain, from 's time,
What should not then be spared. He is already
Traduced for levity; and 't is said in Rome
That Photinus, an eunuch and your maids
Manage this war.

CLEO. Sink Rome, and their tongues rot
That speak against us! A charge we bear i' the war,
And, as the president of my kingdom, will
Appear there for a man. Speak not against it;
I will not stay behind.

ENO. Nay, I have done.
Here comes the emperor.

Enter ANTONY and CANIDIUS

ANT. Is it not strange, Canidius, 20
That from Tarentum and Brundisium
He could so quickly cut the Ionian sea,
And take in Toryne? You have heard on 't, sweet?

That punctuation has been held to justify the meaning, "even if it be not fit, inasmuch as war has been declared against us."

8 *merely*] entirely.

10 *puzzle*] confuse, distract.

14 *Photinus*] In the Greek the name reads *Pothinus*.

23 *take in Toryne*] conquer, subdue Toryne. Toryne was a small town in Epirus, near Actium. For this use of "take in," cf. I, i, 23, *supra*, and III, xiii, 83, *infra*.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT III

CLEO. Celerity is never more admired
Than by the negligent.

ANT. A good rebuke,
Which might have well become the best of men,
To taunt at slackness. Canidius, we
Will fight with him by sea.

CLEO. By sea: what else?

CAN. Why will my lord do so?

ANT. For that he dares us to 't.

ENO. So hath my lord dared him to single fight. 30

CAN. Ay, and to wage this battle at Pharsalia,
Where Cæsar fought with Pompey: but these offers,
Which serve not for his vantage, he shakes off,
And so should you.

ENO. Your ships are not well mann'd,
Your mariners are muleters, reapers, people
Ingross'd by swift impress; in Cæsar's fleet
Are those that often have 'gainst Pompey fought:
Their ships are yare, yours heavy: no disgrace
Shall fall you for refusing him at sea,
Being prepared for land.

ANT. By sea, by sea. 40

ENO. Most worthy sir, you therein throw away
The absolute soldiership you have by land,
Distract your army, which doth most consist
Of war-mark'd footman, leave unexecuted

27 *To taunt at slackness*] In taunting or upbraiding sloth.

35 *muleters*] Cf. 1 Hen. VI, III, ii, 68: "base *muleters* of France."

36 *Ingross'd by swift impress*] Enrolled hastily by forced impressment,
by compulsory enlistment.

38 *yare*] taut, manageable. Cf. III, xiii, 131, and V, ii, 281, *infra*.

SCENE VII ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Your own renowned knowledge, quite forgo
The way which promises assurance, and
Give up yourself merely to chance and hazard
From firm security.

ANT. I'll fight at sea.

CLEO. I have sixty sails, Cæsar none better.

ANT. Our overplus of shipping will we burn; 50
And, with the rest full-mann'd, from the head of Actium
Beat the approaching Cæsar. But if we fail,
We then can do 't at land.

Enter a Messenger

Thy business?

MESS. The news is true, my lord; he is descried;
Cæsar has taken Tornyne.

ANT. Can he be there in person? 't is impossible;
Strange that his power should be. Canidius,
Our nineteen legions thou shalt hold by land,
And our twelve thousand horse. We'll to our ship:
Away, my Thetis!

Enter a Soldier

How now, worthy soldier?

SOLD. O noble emperor, do not fight by sea;
Trust not to rotten planks. Do you misdoubt 60

51 *head of Actium*] Pope's correction of the First Folio reading *head of Action* and the later Folio reading *heart of Actium*.

60 *my Thetis*] Antony playfully gives Cleopatra the name of the sea-nymph since she is to help him in his naval action. In her voyage down the Cydnus, II, ii, 195 *seq.*, *supra*, while Cleopatra was compared to Venus, her attendants were likened to Nereides, or mermaids.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT III

This sword and these my wounds? Let the Egyptians
And the Phœnicians go a-ducking: we
Have used to conquer, standing on the earth
And fighting foot to foot.

ANT. Well, well: away!

[Exeunt Antony, Cleopatra, and Enobarbus.]

SOLD. By Hercules, I think I am i' the right.

CAN. Soldier, thou art: but his whole action grows
Not in the power on 't: so our leader 's led,
And we are women's men.

SOLD. You keep by land

70

The legions and the horse whole, do you not?

CAN. Marcus Octavius, Marcus Justeius,
Publicola and Cælius, are for sea:
But we keep whole by land. This speed of Cæsar's
Carries beyond belief.

SOLD. While he was yet in Rome,
His power went out in such distractions as
Beguiled all spies.

CAN. Who's his lieutenant, hear you?

SOLD. They say, one Taurus.

CAN. Well I know the man.

68-70 *but his whole action . . . women's men*] but his whole conduct in
the war is not founded on that which is his greatest strength, *viz.*, his
land force. A woman's caprice induces him to fight by sea.

69 *leader's led*] Theobald's correction of the Folio *Leaders leade*, which
has been justified as an impatient reference to the fact that both Antony
and Cleopatra are in command, though all the power implicitly belongs
to the latter.

75 *Carries*] Commonly used of the arrow in archery.

76 *distractions*] separate detachments.

SCENE IX ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Enter a Messenger

MESS. The emperor calls Canidius.

CAN. With news the time's with labour, and throes
forth

Each minute some.

[*Exeunt.* 80

SCENE VIII — A PLAIN NEAR ACTIUM

Enter CÆSAR, and TAURUS, with his army, marching

CÆS. Taurus!

TAUR. My lord?

CÆS. Strike not by land; keep whole: provoke not
battle,

Till we have done at sea. Do not exceed
The prescript of this scroll: our fortune lies
Upon this jump.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX — ANOTHER PART OF THE PLAIN

Enter ANTONY and ENOBARBUS

ANT. Set we our squadrons on yond side o' the hill,
In eye of Cæsar's battle; from which place
We may the number of the ships behold,
And so proceed accordingly.

[*Exeunt.*

80-81 *throes forth . . . some*] painfully brings to birth some news every minute. "Throe" as a verb is rare; but cf. *Tempest*, II, i, 221-222: "a birth, indeed, Which *throes* thee much to yield."

SCENE VIII, 5 *prescript*] direction, ordinance, order.

6 *jump*] hazard.

SCENE IX, 2 *battle*] battalion, army.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT III

SCENE X—ANOTHER PART OF THE PLAIN

Enter CANIDIUS, marching with his land army one way; and TAVRUS, the lieutenant of CÆSAR, with his army, the other way. After their going in, is heard the noise of a sea-fight

Alarum. Enter ENOBARBUS

ENO. Naught, naught, all naught! I can behold no longer!

The Antoniad, the Egyptian admiral,
With all their sixty, fly and turn the rudder:
To see 't mine eyes are blasted.

Enter SCARUS

SCAR. Gods and goddesses,
All the whole synod of them!

ENO. What's thy passion?

SCAR. The greater cantle of the world is lost
With very ignorance; we have kiss'd away
Kingdoms and provinces.

ENO. How appears the fight?

SCAR. On our side like the token'd pestilence,
Where death is sure. Yon ribaudred nag of Egypt — 10

SCENE X, 2 *The Antoniad . . . admiral*] According to North's "Plutarch," the "admiral galley" of Cleopatra was called "Antoniad."
6 *cantle*] piece, corner. The word is still familiar in provincial dialects.
9 *the token'd pestilence*] the plague which was always fatal when it developed on the skin certain spots or eruptions which were popularly called "God's tokens." Cf. *L. L. L.*, V, ii, 423: "the *Lord's tokens* on you do I see."

10 *ribaudred nag*] obscene strumpet. "Ribaudred" is an uncommon

SCENE X ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Whom leprosy o'ertake! — i' the midst o' the fight,
 When vantage like a pair of twins appear'd,
 Both as the same, or rather ours the elder, —
 The breese upon her, like a cow in June! —
 Hoists sails and flies.

ENO. That I beheld:
 Mine eyes did sicken at the sight, and could not
 Endure a further view.

SCAR. She once being loof'd,
 The noble ruin of her magic, Antony,
 Claps on his sea-wing, and like a doting mallard, 20
 Leaving the fight in height flies after her:
 I never saw an action of such shame;
 Experience, manhood, honour, ne'er before
 Did violate so itself.

ENO. Alack, alack!

variant of "ribaudrous" and "ribaldish" which are found elsewhere in Elizabethan literature in the sense of filthy, obscene, composed of ribaldry.

12-13 *When vantage . . . the elder*] These lines mean that victory hung in the balance. The scales were practically level, with a slight advantage on the side of Antony and Cleopatra's fleet.

14 *The breese upon her . . . in June*] Like a cow in June, with the breese (*i. e.*, the gadfly) teasing her.

18 *loof'd*] "to loof" or "to luff" means "to sail to windward or before the wind." North several times uses the word in his translation of Plutarch.

20 *mallard*] the wild drake.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT III

Enter CANIDIUS

CAN. Our fortune on the sea is out of breath,
And sinks most lamentably. Had our general
Been what he knew himself, it had gone well:
O, he has given example for our flight
Most grossly by his own!

ENO. Ay, are you thereabouts? Why then good night
Indeed. 30

CAN. Toward Peloponnesus are they fled.

SCAR. 'T is easy to 't; and there I will attend
What further comes.

CAN. To Cæsar will I render
My legions and my horse: six kings already
Show me the way of yielding.

ENO. I'll yet follow
The wounded chance of Antony, though my reason
Sits in the wind against me. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE XI — ALEXANDRIA

CLEOPATRA'S PALACE

Enter ANTONY with Attendants

ANT. Hark! the land bids me tread no more upon 't;
It is ashamed to bear me. Friends, come hither:

30 *Ay, are you thereabouts . . . Indeed*] Ah, is flight what you are pur-
— posing? Why then, our cause is lost indeed.

32 *'T is easy to 't*] The voyage to Peloponnesus is easy.

36 *wounded chance*] broken fortune. Cf. V, ii, 173, *infra*: "the ashes of my
chance."

SCENE XI ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

I am so lated in the world that I
Have lost my way for ever. I have a ship
Laden with gold; take that, divide it; fly,
And make your peace with Cæsar.

ALL. Fly! not we.

ANT. I have fled myself, and have instructed cowards
To run and show their shoulders. Friends, be gone;
I have myself resolved upon a course
Which has no need of you; be gone: 10
My treasure's in the harbour, take it.
I follow'd that I blush to look upon:
My very hairs do mutiny, for the white
Reprove the brown for rashness, and they them
For fear and doting. Friends, be gone: you shall
Have letters from me to some friends that will
Sweep your way for you. Pray you, look not sad,
Nor make replies of loathness: take the hint
Which my despair proclaims; let that be left
Which leaves itself: to the sea-side straightway: 20
I will possess you of that ship and treasure.
Leave me, I pray, a little: pray you now:
Nay, do so; for indeed I have lost command,
Therefore I pray you: I'll see you by and by.

[Sits down.]

3 *lated*] belated, benighted. Cf. *Macb.*, III, iii, 6: "Now spurs the *lated* traveller apace."

17 *Sweep your way for you*] Make your way smooth for you.

18 *replies of loathness*] replies expressive of reluctance to obey me.

23 *I have lost command*] I have lost the power of giving orders.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT III

Enter CLEOPATRA led by CHARMIAN and IRAS; EROS following

EROS. Nay, gentle madam, to him, comfort him.

IRAS. Do, most dear queen.

CHAR. Do! why, what else?

CLEO. Let me sit down. O Juno!

ANT. No, no, no, no, no.

EROS. See you here, sir?

ANT. O fie, fie, fie!

CHAR. Madam!

IRAS. Madam, O good empress!

EROS. Sir, sir!

ANT. Yes, my lord, yes; he at Philippi kept
His sword e'en like a dancer; while I struck
The lean and wrinkled Cassius; and 't was I
That the mad Brutus ended: he alone
Dealt on lieutenantry and no practice had
In the brave squares of war: yet now — No matter. 40

35 *Yes, my lord, yes*] Antony is talking to himself about Cæsar, and quite oblivious of Cleopatra's presence, imagines that he is addressing some courtier or companion in arms.

35-36 *he at Philippi kept . . . like a dancer*] Men, when they danced, wore short swords for ornament, keeping them in their scabbards. Cf. *All's Well*, II, i, 32-33: "no sword worn But one to dance with."

36-38 *I struck . . . Brutus ended*] Antony is inaccurately recalling the actual events of the battle of Philippi. Both Brutus and Cassius committed suicide. See *Jul. Cæs.*, Act V, Scenes iii and v.

39 *Dealt on lieutenantry*] Fought by proxy, made war by his lieutenants. Cf. III, i, 16-17, *supra*: "Cæsar and Antony have ever won More in their officer than person."

40 *squares of war*] squadrons drawn up in squares, on whom the brunt of battle fell.

SCENE XI ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

CLEO. Ah! stand by.

EROS. The queen, my lord, the queen.

IRAS. Go to him, madam, speak to him:

He is unqualitied with very shame.

CLEO. Well then, sustain me: O!

EROS. Most noble sir, arise; the queen approaches:
Her head's declined, and death will seize her, but
Your comfort makes the rescue.

ANT. I have offended reputation,
A most unnoble swerving.

EROS. Sir, the queen.

50

ANT. O, whither hast thou led me, Egypt? See,
How I convey my shame out of thine eyes
By looking back what I have left behind
Stroy'd in dishonour.

CLEO. O my lord, my lord,
Forgive my fearful sails! I little thought
You would have follow'd.

ANT. Egypt, thou knew'st too well
My heart was to thy rudder tied by the strings,
And thou shouldst tow me after: o'er my spirit
Thy full supremacy thou knew'st, and that

44 *unqualitied*] deprived of his faculties (as a soldier).

47 *but*] except, unless.

51-54 *See, How . . . in dishonour*] See how I derive my disgrace from
my infatuation with thine eyes as I look back on my reputation abandoned with my fleet, and destroyed in dishonour.

55 *fearful*] panic-stricken.

57 *the strings*] the heart-strings.

58 *tow*] Rowe's emendation of the Folio reading *stowe*.

Thy beck might from the bidding of the gods
Command me. 60

CLEO. O, my pardon!

ANT. Now I must
To the young man send humble treaties, dodge
And palter in the shifts of lowness; who
With half the bulk o' the world play'd as I pleased,
Making and marring fortunes. You did know
How much you were my conqueror, and that
My sword, made weak by my affection, would
Obey it on all cause.

CLEO. Pardon, pardon!

ANT. Fall not a tear, I say; one of them rates
All that is won and lost: give me a kiss; 70
Even this repays me. We sent our schoolmaster;
Is he come back? Love, I am full of lead.
Some wine, within there, and our viands! Fortune
knows

We scorn her most when most she offers blows.

[*Exeunt.*]

62 *treaties*] proposals of peace.

63 *palter . . . lowness*] equivocate, shuffle, with all the devices characteristic of men of a mean nature.

69 *rates*] pays for, is worth.

71 *our schoolmaster*] Euphronius, the tutor of Antony's children by Cleopatra.

SCENE XII ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

SCENE XII — EGYPT

CÆSAR'S CAMP

Enter CÆSAR, DOLABELLA, THYREUS, with others

CÆS. Let him appear that's come from Antony.
Know you him?

DOL. Cæsar, 't is his schoolmaster:
An argument that he is pluck'd, when hither
He sends so poor a pinion of his wing,
Which had superfluous kings for messengers
Not many moons gone by.

Enter EUPHRONIUS, ambassador from Antony

CÆS. Approach, and speak.

EUPH. Such as I am I come from Antony:
I was of late as petty to his ends
As is the morn-dew on the myrtle-leaf
To his grand sea.

CÆS. Be 't so: declare thine office.

10

EUPH. Lord of his fortunes he salutes thee, and
Requires to live in Egypt: which not granted,

SCENE XII (Stage Direction) *Enter . . . with others*] The Folios read here *Enter Cæsar, Agrippa and Dolabella with others*. But Agrippa does not appear in this scene.

10 *To his grand sea*] Compared to the full tide of his prosperity. For the Folio reading *his* Hanmer substituted *the*, which much simplifies the passage, and brings the morning-dew on the myrtle-leaf into clear comparison with the vast ocean.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT III

He lessens his requests, and to thee sues
 To let him breathe between the heavens and earth,
 A private man in Athens: this for him.
 Next, Cleopatra does confess thy greatness;
 Submits her to thy might, and of thee craves
 The circle of the Ptolemies for her heirs,
 Now hazarded to thy grace.

CÆS. For Antony,
 I have no ears to his request. The queen
 Of audience nor desire shall fail, so she
 From Egypt drive her all-disgraced friend,
 Or take his life there: this if she perform,
 She shall not sue unheard. So to them both.

EUPH. Fortune pursue thee!

CÆS. Bring him through the bands.
[Exit Euphronius.]

[To Thyreus] To try thy eloquence, now 't is time: dis-
 patch;

From Antony win Cleopatra: promise,
 And in our name, what she requires; add more,
 From thine invention, offers: women are not
 In their best fortunes strong, but want will perjure
 The ne'er-touch'd vestal: try thy cunning, Thyreus;

13 *lessens*] The First Folio reads *lessons*, which may be right in the sense of "schools" or "disciplines."

18 *circle*] crown.

19 *hazarded*] staked and lost.

29 *offers*] The position of this word is awkward; "add more offers" would be the regular sequence. But there is a clear intention to put great emphasis on the word "offers."

SCENE XIII ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Make thine own edict for thy pains, which we
Will answer as a law.

THYR. Cæsar, I go.

CÆS. Observe how Antony becomes his flaw,
And what thou think'st his very action speaks
In every power that moves.

THYR. Cæsar, I shall. [Exeunt.]

SCENE XIII — ALEXANDRIA

CLEOPATRA'S PALACE

Enter CLEOPATRA, ENOBARBUS, CHARMIAN, and IRAS

CLEO. What shall we do, Enobarbus?

ENO. Think, and die.

CLEO. Is Antony or we in fault for this?

ENO. Antony only, that would make his will
Lord of his reason. What though you fled
From that great face of war, whose several ranges
Frighted each other, why should he follow?

32 *Make thine . . . thy pains*] Fix the terms of thy own reward for thy trouble.

34 *how Antony becomes his flaw*] how Antony bears himself in the collapse of his fortune.

35-36 *what thou think'st . . . moves*] [inform us] what meaning you think should attach to the slightest movement in all his bearing and gait.

1 *Think, and die*] Cf. *Jul. Cæs.*, II, i, 187: "take thought, and die for Cæsar."

5-6 *whose several ranges . . . each other*] in which the several ranks infected each other with panic.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT III

The itch of his affection should not then
 Have nick'd his captainship; at such a point,
 When half to half the world opposed, he being
 The mered question: 't was a shame no less
 Than was his loss, to course your flying flags
 And leave his navy gazing.

10

CLEO.

Prithee, peace.

Enter ANTONY, with EUPHRONIUS the Ambassador

ANT. Is that his answer?

EUPH. Ay, my lord.

ANT. The queen shall then have courtesy, so she
 Will yield us up.

EUPH. He says so.

ANT. Let her know 't.

To the boy Cæsar send this grizzled head,
 And he will fill thy wishes to the brim
 With principalities.

CLEO. That head, my lord?

7-8 *The itch . . . captainship*] The figure is a coarse one. The "itch" is the "ringworm" which eats into the scalp and destroys the hair. Enobarbus means that Antony's passion for Cleopatra should not have cut into his professional duties.

10 *mered*] "mered" is doubtless a participial adjective formed by way of emphasis from "mere." Antony was the one and only cause, the sole moving spirit, of the war.

11 *course*] pursue.

17 *boy Cæsar*] "boy" is used contemptuously. Cf. IV, i, 1, and IV, xii, 48, *infra*. Cæsar was thirty-one years and eight days old on the day of the battle of Actium, 30 September, 31 B. C. Antony was twenty years his senior.

SCENE XIII ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

ANT. To him again: tell him he wears the rose 20
Of youth upon him, from which the world should
note

Something particular: his coin, ships, legions,
May be a coward's, whose ministers would prevail
Under the service of a child as soon
As i' the command of Cæsar: I dare him therefore
To lay his gay comparisons apart
And answer me declined, sword against sword,
Ourselves alone. I'll write it: follow me.

[*Exeunt Antony and Euphronius.*]

ENO. [*Aside*] Yes, like enough, high-battled Cæsar will
Unstate his happiness and be staged to the show 30
Against a sword! I see men's judgements are
A parcel of their fortunes, and things outward
Do draw the inward quality after them,
To suffer all alike. That he should dream,

22 *Something particular*] Something of his personal character or individuality.

26 *lay his gay comparisons apart*] ignore his comparative advantages, the advantage of youth compared with my mature age. For *comparisons* Pope read *caparisons* (*i. e.*, imperial trappings). Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 286: "For rich *caparisons* or trappings gay." But the change is not necessary.

27 *declined*] in my fallen state.

30-31 *Unstate his happiness . . . a sword!*] Abdicate his good fortune and be exhibited on a stage to the public gaze in conflict with a professional swordsman or gladiator!

32 *A parcel of*] Of a piece with.

32-34 *things outward . . . suffer all alike*] external circumstance receives the impress or colour of men's own idiosyncrasies, so as to induce the conviction that all men are moved by the same sentiment.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT III

Knowing all measures, the full Cæsar will
 Answer his emptiness! Cæsar, thou hast subdued
 His judgement too.

Enter an Attendant

ATT. A messenger from Cæsar.

CLEO. What, no more ceremony? See, my women,
 Against the blown rose may they stop their nose
 That kneel'd unto the buds. Admit him, sir. [*Exit Attend.* 40

ENO. [*Aside*] Mine honesty and I begin to square.
 The loyalty well held to fools does make
 Our faith mere folly: yet he that can endure
 To follow with allegiance a fall'n lord
 Does conquer him that did his master conquer,
 And earns a place i' the story.

Enter THYREUS

CLEO. Cæsar's will?

THYR. Hear it apart.

CLEO. None but friends: say boldly.

THYR. So, haply, are they friends to Antony.

ENO. He needs as many, sir, as Cæsar has,
 Or needs not us. If Cæsar please, our master 50
 Will leap to be his friend: for us, you know,
 Whose he is we are, and that is Cæsar's.

35 *Knowing all measures*] Having experienced every measure of fortune.
full] completely endowed. Cf. line 87, *infra*.

36 *Answer his emptiness*] Bring himself to his level of vacuity.

39 *the blown rose*] the rose which is overblown has lost its fragrance.

41 *square*] fight, quarrel.

42-43 *loyalty . . . folly*] fidelity kept to fools is the merest silliness.

51-52 *for us . . . Cæsar's*] as for us, you know very well that (though we

SCENE XIII ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

THYR.

So.

Thus then, thou most renown'd: Cæsar entreats
Not to consider in what case thou stand'st
Further than he is Cæsar.

CLEO.

Go on: right royal.

THYR. He knows that you embrace not Antony
As you did love, but as you fear'd him.

CLEO.

O!

THYR. The scars upon your honour therefore he
Does pity as constrained blemishes,
Not as deserved.

CLEO.

He is a god and knows

60

What is most right: mine honour was not yielded,
But conquer'd merely.

ENO.

[*Aside*] To be sure of that,

I will ask Antony. Sir, sir, thou art so leaky
That we must leave thee to thy sinking, for
Thy dearest quit thee.

[*Exit.*]

THYR.

Shall I say to Cæsar

What you require of him? for he partly begs
To be desired to give. It much would please him,
That of his fortunes you should make a staff
To lean upon: but it would warm his spirits,
To hear from me you had left Antony,

70

are our master's friends, yet) we are under the same control or
domination as he is, and that is, under Cæsar's.

55 *he is Cæsar*] he, being Cæsar, is great enough to be merciful. Cf.

V, i, 59-60: "for Cæsar cannot live To be ungentle."

62 *merely*] completely, altogether.

And put yourself under his shroud,
The universal landlord.

CLEO. What 's your name?

THYR. My name is Thyreus.

CLEO. Most kind messenger,
Say to great Cæsar this: in deputation
I kiss his conquering hand: tell him, I am prompt
To lay my crown at 's feet, and there to kneel:
Tell him, from his all-obeying breath I hear
The doom of Egypt.

THYR. 'T is your noblest course.
Wisdom and fortune combating together,
If that the former dare but what it can,
No chance may shake it. Give me grace to lay
My duty on your hand.

CLEO. Your Cæsar's father oft,
When he hath mused of taking kingdoms in,

80

71-72 *under his shroud . . . landlord*] under the protection of him who is the lord of the universe. "Shrowds" which commonly means "winding sheets," is similarly used by Milton, *Comus*, 147: "Run to your *shrouds* within these brakes and trees."

74 *in deputation*] by proxy; with you as deputy for Cæsar. Theobald's emendation of the Folio reading *in disputation*, a difficult reading which has been held to mean here "with a view to close the controversy."

77 *all-obeying*] all-obeyed, or compelling all to obey. The present for the past participle is no uncommon usage.

81 *Give me grace*] Grant me the favour.

82 *Cæsar's father*] Julius Cæsar, who was rightly the grand-uncle of Octavius.

83 *taking kingdoms in*] conquering, subduing kingdoms. Cf. I, i, 23, *supra*: "Take in that kingdom," and III, vii, 23.

SCENE XIII ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Bestow'd his lips on that unworthy place,
As it rain'd kisses.

Re-enter ANTONY and ENOBARBUS

ANT. Favours, by Jove that thunders!
What art thou, fellow?

THYR. One that but performs
The bidding of the fullest man and worthiest
To have command obey'd.

ENO. [*Aside*] You will be whipp'd.

ANT. Approach, there! Ah, you kite! Now, gods
and devils!

Authority melts from me: of late, when I cried "Ho!"⁸⁰
Like boys unto a muss, kings would start forth,
And cry "Your will?" Have you no ears?
I am Antony yet.

Enter Attendants

Take hence this Jack, and whip him.

ENO. [*Aside*] 'Tis better playing with a lion's whelp
Than with an old one dying.

ANT. Moon and stars!
Whip him. Were 't twenty of the greatest tributaries
That do acknowledge Cæsar, should I find them
So saucy with the hand of she here, — what's her name,

85 *As*] As if.

87 *fullest*] most perfectly endowed. Cf. line 35, *supra*: "the *full* Cæsar."

91 *a muss*] a scramble.

93 *Jack*] A common term of contempt for a saucy fellow. Cf. line 103,
infra.

Since she was Cleopatra? Whip him, fellows,
Till, like a boy, you see him cringe his face, 100
And whine aloud for mercy: take him hence.

THYR. Mark Antony, —

ANT. Tug him away: being whipp'd,
Bring him again: this Jack of Cæsar's shall
Bear us an errand to him. [*Exeunt Attendants, with Thyreus.*]
You were half blasted ere I knew you: ha!
Have I my pillow left unpress'd in Rome,
Forborne the getting of a lawful race,
And by a gem of women, to be abused
By one that looks on feeders?

CLEO. Good my lord, —

ANT. You have been a boggler ever: 110
But when we in our viciousness grow hard —
O misery on 't! — the wise gods seel our eyes;
In our own filth drop our clear judgements; make us
Adore our errors; laugh at 's while we strut
To our confusion.

CLEO. O, is 't come to this?

ANT. I found you as a morsel cold upon

103 *Jack*] Cf. line 93, *supra*.

109 *feeders*] servants. Cf. *As you like it*, II, iv, 94: "I will your very faithful *feeder* be."

110 *a boggler*] one who plays fast and loose, one who is fickle or inconstant.

111 *hard*] hardened.

112 *seel*] sew up; a process applied to young hawks in training. Cf. V, ii, 145, *infra*.

113 *In our own filth . . . judgements*] Amid our moral defilement destroy all clearness of judgment.

SCENE XIII ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Dead Cæsar's trencher; nay, you were a fragment
Of Cneius Pompey's; besides what hotter hours,
Unregister'd in vulgar fame, you have
Luxuriously pick'd out: for I am sure, 120
Though you can guess what temperance should be,
You know not what it is.

CLEO. Wherefore is this?

ANT. To let a fellow that will take rewards
And say "God quit you!" be familiar with
My playfellow, your hand, this kingly seal
And plighter of high hearts! O, that I were
Upon the hill of Basan, to outroar
The horned herd! for I have savage cause;
And to proclaim it civilly, were like
A halter'd neck which does the hangman thank 130
For being yare about him.

Re-enter Attendants, with THYREUS

Is he whipp'd?

FIRST ATT. Soundly, my lord.

ANT. Cried he? and begg'd he pardon?

117. *a [fragment]* often used of a piece of broken meat.

119 *vulgar fame*] popular report.

120 *Luxuriously*] Lasciviously, wantonly.

124 *quit*] requite or repay.

127-128 *the hill of Basan . . . herd*] a scriptural reference. Cf. *Psalms*,
xxii, 12: "Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round," and lxxviii, 16:
"The hill of God is as *the hill of Bashan*; an high hill as the hill of
Bashan."

131 *yare*] adroit, quick, nimble. Cf. III, vii, 38, *supra*, and V, ii, 281,
infra.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT III

FIRST ATT. He did ask favour.

ANT. If that thy father live, let him repent
 Thou wast not made his daughter; and be thou sorry
 To follow Cæsar in his triumph, since
 Thou hast been whipp'd for following him: henceforth
 The white hand of a lady fever thee,
 Shake thou to look on 't. Get thee back to Cæsar,
 Tell him thy entertainment: look thou say 140
 He makes me angry with him; for he seems
 Proud and disdainful, harping on what I am,
 Not what he knew I was: he makes me angry;
 And at this time most easy 't is to do 't,
 When my good stars that were my former guides
 Have empty left their orbs and shot their fires
 Into the abysm of hell. If he mislike
 My speech and what is done, tell him he has
 Hipparchus, my enfranchised bondman, whom
 He may at pleasure whip, or hang, or torture, 150
 As he shall like, to quit me: urge it thou:
 Hence with thy stripes, begone! [Exit Thyreus.]

CLEO. Have you done yet?

ANT. Alack, our terrene moon
 Is now eclipsed, and it portends alone
The fall of Antony.

CLEO. I must stay his time.

146 *orbs*] the crystalline spheres, in which the stars, according to the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, were supposed to be enclosed. Cf. IV, xv, 10, *infra*, and *Mids. N. Dr.*, II, i, 153: "And certain stars shot madly from their *spheres*."

151 *quit*] requite, repay. Cf. line 124, *supra*.

153 *our terrene moon*] the moon, which is the satellite of the earth.

SCENE XIII ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

ANT. To flatter Cæsar, would you mingle eyes
With one that ties his points?

CLEO. Not know me yet?

ANT. Cold-hearted toward me?

CLEO. Ah, dear, if I be so,
From my cold heart let heaven engender hail,
And poison it in the source, and the first stone 160
Drop in my neck: as it determines, so
Dissolve my life! The next Cæsarion smite!
Till by degrees the memory of my womb,
Together with my brave Egyptians all,
By the discandying of this pelleted storm
Lie graveless, till the flies and gnats of Nile
Have buried them for prey!

ANT. I am satisfied.
Cæsar sits down in Alexandria, where
I will oppose his fate. Our force by land
Hath nobly held; our sever'd navy too 170

157 *one that ties his points*] his valet, who laces up his trunk-hose.

161 *as it determines*] as the hailstone comes to an end or dissolves.

162 *Cæsarion smite!*] Cæsarion was Cleopatra's son by Julius Cæsar.
(Cf. III, vi, 6, *supra*.) She calls down a curse on all the fruit of
her womb. *Cæsarion smite!* is Hanmer's correction of the Folio
misreading *Cæsarian smite*.

163 *the memory of my womb*] the memorials of my womb, my children.

165 *By the discandying . . . storm*] with the thawing or melting of this
hailstorm of pellets. Cf. IV, xii, 22, *infra*: "The hearts . . . do *dis-*
candy, melt their sweets." To "discandy" is properly to liquefy can-
died sugar. The Folios have the misreading *discandering*.

166-167 *till the flies . . . prey*] till the insects have made their stomachs
the burial places of the dead Egyptians. Cf. *Macb.*, III, iv, 72-73:
"our monuments Shall be the maws of kites."

Have knit again, and fleet, threatening most sea-like.
Where hast thou been, my heart? Dost thou hear, lady?
If from the field I shall return once more
To kiss these lips, I will appear in blood;
I and my sword will earn our chronicle:
There's hope in 't yet.

CLEO. That's my brave lord!

ANT. I will be treble-sinew'd, hearted, breath'd,
And fight maliciously: for when mine hours
Were nice and lucky, men did ransom lives 180
Of me for jests; but now I'll set my teeth,
And send to darkness all that stop me. Come,
Let's have one other gaudy night: call to me
All my sad captains; fill our bowls once more:
Let's mock the midnight bell.

CLEO. It is my birth-day:
I had thought to have held it poor, but since my lord
Is Antony again, I will be Cleopatra.

ANT. We will yet do well.

171 *fleet*] sail securely, float.

174 *in blood*] in first-rate condition.

175 *earn our chronicle*] do deeds that deserve chronicling.

178 *treble-sinew'd, hearted, breath'd*] The epithet "treble" is understood before "hearted" and "breath'd."

180 *nice*] devoted to trifling pursuits. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, V, ii, 18: "The letter was not *nice* but full of charge."

182 *darkness*] *sc.* of death.

183 *gaudy night*] night of festivity. The substantive "gaudy" is still similarly used at Oxford.

186 *held it poor*] kept it without ostentation, without ceremony.

187 *I will be Cleopatra*] I will assume again my rôle of imperial hospitality.

SCENE XIII ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

CLEO. Call all his noble captains to my lord.

ANT. Do so, we'll speak to them; and to night I'll
force 190

The wine peep through their scars. Come on, my
queen;

There's sap in 't yet. The next time I do fight
I'll make death love me, for I will contend.

Even with his pestilent scythe. [*Exeunt all but Enobarbus.*]

ENO. Now he'll outstare the lightning. To be
furious •

Is to be frighted out of fear; and in that mood

The dove will peck the estridge; and I see still,

A diminution in our captain's brain

Restores his heart: when valour preys on reason,

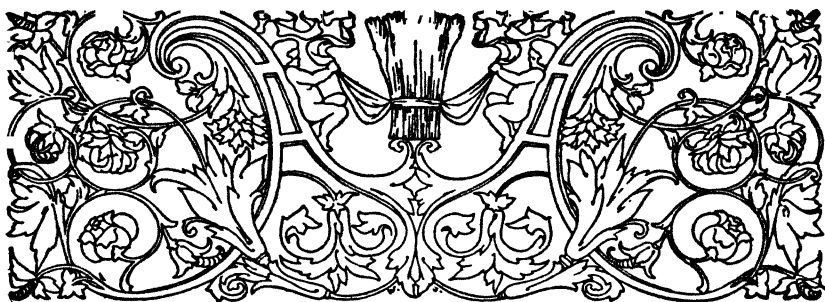
It eats the sword it fights with. I will seek 200

Some way to leave him. [*Exit.*]

193 *contend. Even with*] Even rival.

194 *his pestilent scythe*] his scythe that is as fatal as pestilence.

197 *the estridge*] the gosshawk (not the ostrich), which might well be
pecked at by the dove. Cf. *3 Hen. VI*, I, iv, 41: "*So doves do peck
the falcon's piercing talons.*"



ACT FOURTH — SCENE I

BEFORE ALEXANDRIA. CÆSAR'S CAMP

Enter CÆSAR, AGRIPPA, and MÆCENAS, with his army: CÆSAR reading a letter

CÆSAR



E CALLS ME BOY, AND
chides as he had power
To beat me out of Egypt; my
messenger
He hath whipp'd with rods;
dares me to personal combat,
Cæsar to Antony. Let the old
ruffian know
I have many other ways to die,
meantime
Laugh at his challenge.

MÆC. Cæsar must think,
When one so great begins to
rage, he's hunted
Even to falling Give him no breath, but now
Make boot of his distraction. Never anger
Make good guard for itself.

CÆS. Let our best heads 10
Know that to-morrow the last of many battles
We mean to fight. Within our files there are,
Of those that served Mark Antony but late,
Enough to fetch him in. See it done:
And feast the army; we have store to do 't,
And they have earn'd the waste. Poor Antony ! [*Exeunt.*

CLEOPATRA'S PALACE.

Enter ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, ENOBARBUS, CHARMIAN, IRAS, ALEXAS,
with others

ANT. He will not fight with me, Domitius?

ENo.	DESCRIPTION	No.
1	1000	1
2	1000	2
3	1000	3
4	1000	4
5	1000	5
6	1000	6
7	1000	7
8	1000	8
9	1000	9
10	1000	10
11	1000	11
12	1000	12
13	1000	13
14	1000	14
15	1000	15
16	1000	16
17	1000	17
18	1000	18
19	1000	19
20	1000	20
21	1000	21
22	1000	22
23	1000	23
24	1000	24
25	1000	25
26	1000	26
27	1000	27
28	1000	28
29	1000	29
30	1000	30
31	1000	31
32	1000	32
33	1000	33
34	1000	34
35	1000	35
36	1000	36
37	1000	37
38	1000	38
39	1000	39
40	1000	40
41	1000	41
42	1000	42
43	1000	43
44	1000	44
45	1000	45
46	1000	46
47	1000	47
48	1000	48
49	1000	49
50	1000	50
51	1000	51
52	1000	52
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56	1000	56
57	1000	57
58	1000	58
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86	1000	86
87	1000	87
88	1000	88
89	1000	89
90	1000	90
91	1000	91
92	1000	92
93	1000	93
94	1000	94
95	1000	95
96	1000	96
97	1000	97
98	1000	98
99	1000	99
100	1000	100

ANT. Why should he not?

ENO. He thinks, being twenty times of better fortune,
He is twenty men to one.

1 *He calls me boy*] Cf. III, xiii, 17, *supra* and IV, xii, 48, *infra*.

5 *I have many other ways to die*] Apparently Cæsar here acknowledges that Antony's prowess as a swordsman would expose an opponent to serious risk in a duel, and that he (Cæsar) intends to challenge death some other way. On the other hand, Plutarch in the Greek original clearly makes Cæsar remark in the corresponding passage that *Antony* has many other ways to die. Both the French translation of Amyot and the English translation of North leave the precise intention of the sentence ambiguous. Some editors, in order to bring the passage into harmony with Plutarch's text, substitute *He hath* for *I have*. The change is needless.

9 *Make boot of* Take advantage of, make capital out of.

14 *fetch him in*] surround him.

16 *the waste*] the expense.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT IV

ANT. To-morrow, soldier,
By sea and land I'll fight: or I will live,
Or bathe my dying honour in the blood
Shall make it live again. Woo't thou fight well?

ENO. I'll strike, and cry "Take all."

ANT. Well said; come on.
Call forth my household servants: let's to-night
Be bounteous at our meal.

Enter three or four Servitors

Give me thy hand, 10
Thou hast been rightly honest; — so hast thou; —
Thou, — and thou, — and thou: you have served me
well,
And kings have been your fellows.

CLEO. [*Aside to Eno.*] What means this?

ENO. [*Aside to Cleo.*] 'Tis one of those odd tricks
which sorrow shoots
Out of the mind.

ANT. And thou art honest too.
I wish I could be made so many men,
And all of you clapp'd up together in
An Antony, that I might do you service
So good as you have done.

SERV. The gods forbid!

7 *Woo't thou*] Wilt thou? Cf. IV, xv, 59, *infra*. "Woo't" is in itself
equivalent to "wilt thou"; "thou" is redundant.

8 "*Take all*"] Let the victor take all, let there be no quarter. The phrase
is from the gaming table and implies that the victor is entitled to all
the stakes.

17 *clapp'd up together*] beaten up together (like eggs).

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

ANT. Well, my good fellows, wait on me to-night: 20
 Scant not my cups, and make as much of me
 As when mine empire was your fellow too
 And suffer'd my command.

CLEO. [*Aside to Eno.*] What does he mean?

ENO. [*Aside to Cleo.*] To make his followers weep.

ANT. Tend me to-night;

May be it is the period of your duty:
 Haply you shall not see me more; or if,
 A mangled shadow: perchance to-morrow
 You'll serve another master. I look on you
 As one that takes his leave Mine honest friends,
 I turn you not away; but, like a master 30
 Married to your good service, stay till death:
 Tend me to-night two hours, I ask no more,
 And the gods yield you for't!

ENO. What mean you, sir,
 To give them this discomfort? Look, they weep,
 And I, an ass, am onion-eyed: for shame,
 Transform us not to women.

ANT. Ho, ho, ho!

25 *period*] termination.

26-27 *or if, A mangled shadow*] or if you see me more, you will see me
 a mangled shadow of what I was.

33 *yield you*] reward you.

35 *onion-eyed*] tearful as from the smell of onions. Enobarbus has
 already made ironical reference to this effect of onions, I, ii, 164,
supra: "tears live in an onion."

36 *Ho, ho, ho!*] Antony seems forcing a laugh, though this interjec-
 tion has been interpreted as a call to stop, like the carter's
 "Whoa!"

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT IV

Now the witch take me, if I meant it thus!
Grace grow where those drops fall! My hearty friends,
You take me in too dolorous a sense;
For I spake to you for your comfort, did desire you 40
To burn this night with torches: know, my hearts,
I hope well of to-morrow, and will lead you
Where rather I'll expect victorious life
Than death and honour. Let's to supper, come,
And drown consideration. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III—THE SAME

BEFORE THE PALACE

Enter two Soldiers to their guard

FIRST SOLD. Brother, good night: to-morrow is the
day.

SEC. SOLD. It will determine one way: fare you
well.

Heard you of nothing strange about the streets?

FIRST SOLD. Nothing. What news?

SEC. SO D. Belike 't is but a rumour. Good night
to you.

FIRST SOLD. Well, sir, good night.

Enter two other Soldiers

SEC. SOLD. Soldiers, have careful watch.

2 *determine*] come to an end.

SCENE III ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

THIRD SOLD. And you. Good night, good night.

[They place themselves in every corner of the stage.]

FOURTH SOLD. Here we: and if to-morrow
Our navy thrive, I have an absolute hope 10
Our landmen will stand up.

THIRD SOLD. 'T is a brave army,
And full of purpose. *[Music of hautboys as under the stage.]*

FOURTH SOLD. Peace! what noise?

FIRST SOLD. List, list!

SEC. SOLD. Hark!

FIRST SOLD. Music i' the air.

THIRD SOLD. Under the earth.

FOURTH SOLD. It signs well, does it not?

THIRD SOLD. No.

FIRST SOLD. Peace, I say!

What should this mean?

SEC. SOLD. 'T is the god Hercules, whom Antony
loved,

Now leaves him.

FIRST SOLD. Walk; let 's see if other watchmen
Do hear what we do.

SEC. SOLD. How now, masters!

ALL. *[Speaking together]* How now! How now! Do 20
you hear this?

FIRST SOLD. Ay; is 't not strange?

THIRD SOLD. Do you hear, masters? do you hear?

14 *It signs well]* It is a good omen.

16 *the god Hercules . . . loved]* Antony reckoned Hercules his ancestor.

Cf. I, iii, 84, *supra*, and IV, xii, 44, *infra*: "Alcides, thou mine
Ancestor."

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT IV

FIRST SOLD. Follow the noise so far as we have
quarter;
Let 's see how it will give off.
ALL. Content. 'T is strange. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV — THE SAME A ROOM IN THE PALACE

Enter ANTONY and CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN and others attending

ANT. Eros !, mine armour, Eros !

CLEO. Sleep a little.

ANT. No, my chuck. Eros, come ; mine armour, Eros !

Enter EROS with armour

Come, good fellow, put mine iron on :
If fortune be not ours to-day, it is
Because we brave her : come.

CLEO. Nay, I 'll help too.

What 's this for ?

ANT. Ah, let be, let be ! thou art
The armourer of my heart : false, false ; this, this.

CLEO. Sooth, la, I 'll help : thus it must be.

ANT. Well, well ;

24 *so far as we have quarter*] so far as our bounds go, to the extent of our
beat.

25 *give off*] terminate, turn out.

3 *mine iron*] my armour. The Folios read *thine iron*, which would mean
"the armour in thine hand."

5-8 *Nay, I'll help too . . . thus it must be*] The Folios give all these lines
to Cleopatra, adding the word *Anthony* after *help too* in line 5.

Malone's rearrangement is followed here.

8 *Sooth, la*] In truth, indeed.

SCENE IV ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

We shall thrive now. Seest thou, my good fellow?
Go put on thy defences.

EROS. Briefly, sir.

10

CLEO. Is not this buckled well?

ANT. Rarely, rarely:

He that unbuckles this, till we do please
To daff't for our repose, shall hear a storm.
Thou fumblest, Eros; and my queen's a squire
More tight at this than thou: dispatch. O love,
That thou couldst see my wars to-day, and knew'st
The royal occupation! thou shouldst see
A workman in 't.

Enter an armed Soldier

Good morrow to thee; welcome:
Thou look'st like him that knows a warlike charge:
To business that we love we rise betime,
And go to 't with delight.

20

SOLD. A thousand, sir,
Early though 't be, have on their riveted trim,
And at the port expect you. [*Shout. Trumpets flourish.*]

Enter Captains and Soldiers

CAPT. The morn is fair. Good morrow, general.

ALL. Good morrow, general.

10 *Briefly*] Quickly, immediately.

13 *To daff't*] To doff it, take it off.

15 *tight*] adroit, handy.

22 *their riveted trim*] their equipment of armour.

23 *the port*] the gate.

24 *The morn is fair . . . general*] The Folios give this piece to "Alexas,"
but he had already revolted from Antony. See IV, vi, 12-16, *infra*.

ANT. 'T is well blown, lads:
 This morning, like the spirit of a youth
 That means to be of note, begins betimes.
 So, so; come, give me that: this way; well said.
 Fare thee well, dame, whate'er becomes of me:
 This is a soldier's kiss: rebukeable 30
 And worthy shameful check it were, to stand
 On more mechanic compliment; I'll leave thee
 Now like a man of steel. You that will fight,
 Follow me close; I'll bring you to 't. Adieu.

[*Exeunt Antony, Eros, Captains, and Soldiers.*]

CHAR. Please you, retire to your chamber.

CLEO. Lead me.
 He goes forth gallantly. That he and Cæsar might
 Determine this great war in single fight!
 Then Antony — but now — Well, on. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V — ALEXANDRIA

ANTONY'S CAMP

Trumpets sound. Enter ANTONY and EROS; a Soldier meeting them

SOLD. The gods make this a happy day to Antony!

ANT. Would thou and those thy scars had once pre-
 vail'd

To make me fight at land!

25 '*T is well blown*] The day is in full blossom.

32 *more mechanic compliment*] courtesy better befitting common or ordinary people, the labouring classes.

SCENE V ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

SOLD. Hadst thou done so,
The kings that have revolted and the soldier
That has this morning left thee would have still
Follow'd thy heels.

ANT. Who's gone this morning?

SOLD. Who!

One ever near thee: call for Enobarbus,
He shall not hear thee, or from Cæsar's camp
Say "I am none of thine."

ANT. What say'st thou?

SOLD. Sir,

He is with Cæsar.

EROS. Sir, his chests and treasure

10

He has not with him.

ANT. Is he gone?

SOLD. Most certain.

ANT. Go, Eros, send his treasure after; do it;
Detain no jot, I charge thee: write to him —
I will subscribe — gentle adieus and greetings;
Say that I wish he never find more cause
To change a master. O, my fortunes have
Corrupted honest men! Dispatch. Enobarbus! [*Exeunt.*]

17 *Dispatch. Enobarbus!*] Steevens' punctuation. The First Folio reads *Dispatch Enobarbus*; the Second Folio, *Dispatch Eros*. Antony is bidding Eros hasten to fulfil his commission, and then he sighs out in sorrow the name of his old follower, Enobarbus, who has deserted him.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT IV

SCENE VI — ALEXANDRIA

CÆSAR'S CAMP

Flourish. Enter CÆSAR with AGRIPPA, ENOBARBUS, and others

CÆS. Go forth, Agrippa, and begin the fight:
Our will is Antony be took alive;
Make it so known.

AGR. Cæsar, I shall. [Exit.

CÆS. The time of universal peace is near:
Prove this a prosperous day, the three-nook'd world
Shall bear the olive freely.

Enter a Messenger

MESS. Antony
Is come into the field.

CÆS. Go charge Agrippa
Plant those that have revolted in the van,
That Antony may seem to spend his fury 10
Upon himself. [Exeunt all but Enobarbus.

ENO. Alexas did revolt, and went to Jewry
On affairs of Antony; there did persuade
Great Herod to incline himself to Cæsar
And leave his master Antony: for this pains
Cæsar hath hang'd him. Canidius and the rest

6 *the three-nook'd world*] the three regions of the world, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Cf. *Jul. Cæs.*, IV, i, 14: "*The three-fold world*," and *K. John*, V, vii, 116: "*the three corners of the world*."

7 *bear the olive*] produce the olive tree, the symbol of peace.

SCENE VI ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

That fell away have entertainment, but
No honourable trust. I have done ill;
Of which I do accuse myself so sorely
That I will joy no more.

Enter a Soldier of Cæsar's

SOLD. Enobarbus, Antony 20
Hath after thee sent all thy treasure, with
His bounty overplus: the messenger
Came on my guard, and at thy tent is now
Unloading of his mules.

ENO. I give it you.

SOLD. Mock not, Enobarbus:
I tell you true: best you safed the bringer
Out of the host; I must attend mine office,
Or would have done 't myself. Your emperor
Continues still a Jove. [Exit. 30

ENO. I am alone the villain of the earth,
And feel I am so most. O Antony,
Thou mine of bounty, how wouldst thou have paid
My better service, when my turpitude
Thou dost so crown with gold! This blows my heart:
If swift thought break it not, a swifter mean
Shall outstrike thought: but thought will do 't, I feel.
I fight against thee! No: I will go seek
Some ditch wherein to die; the foul'st best fits
My latter part of life. [Exit. 30

17 *have entertainment*] have military employment and pay.

23 *on my guard*] in or under my guard or escort.

34 *This blows my heart*] This generous treatment swells my heart to bursting.

SCENE VII—FIELD OF BATTLE BETWEEN THE CAMPS

Alarum. Drums and trumpets. Enter AGRIPPA and others

AGR. Retire, we have engaged ourselves too far:
 Cæsar himself has work, and our oppression
 Exceeds what we expected. [*Exeunt.*]

Alarum. Enter ANTONY, and SCARUS wounded

SCAR. O my brave emperor, this is fought indeed!
 Had we done so at first, we had droven them home
 With clouts about their heads.

ANT. Thou bleed'st apace.

SCAR. I had a wound here that was like a T,
 But now 't is made an H. [*Retreat afar off.*]

ANT. They do retire.

SCAR. We 'll beat 'em into bench-holes: I have yet
 Room for six scotches more. 10

2 *Cæsar himself has work, and our oppression]* Cæsar himself is in straits,
 and the armed force which oppresses us.

6 *clouts]* bandages.

7-8 *I had a wound . . . T . . . H]* Scarus means that he had a
 T-shaped wound, which had begun to ache. The pun depends on
 the fact that the word "ache" had the same pronunciation as the
 letter "H," *i. e.*, aitch. Cf. *Tempest*, I, ii, 370, and note.

9 *beat 'em into bench-holes]* make them take cover in a privy. "To run
 into a bench-hole" was a vulgar phrase for "beating an undignified
 retreat."

9-10 *I have yet Room . . . more]* I have still the capacity to have six
 more slashes at them.

SCENE VIII ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Enter EROS

EROS. They are beaten, sir, and our advantage serves
For a fair victory.

SCAR. Let us score their backs
And snatch 'em up, as we take hares, behind:
'T is sport to maul a runner.

ANT. I will reward thee
Once for thy spritely comfort, and ten-fold
For thy good valour. Come thee on.

SCAR. I'll halt after.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VIII—UNDER THE WALLS OF ALEXANDRIA

Alarum. Enter ANTONY, in a march; SCARUS, with others

ANT. We have beat him to his camp: run one before,
And let the queen know of our gests. To-morrow,
Before the sun shall see 's, we'll spill the blood
That has to-day escaped. I thank you all;
For doughty-handed are you, and have fought
Not as you served the cause, but as 't had been
Each man's like mine; you have shown all Hectors.
Enter the city, clip your wives, your friends,
Tell them your feats, whilst they with joyful tears

2 *gests*] exploits, feats of arms (Latin "*res gestæ*"). Cf. "your feats," line 9, *infra*. *Gests* is Theobald's correction of the Folio reading, *guests*, which Johnson retained, thinking that Antony intended to bring his officers home to sup with Cleopatra. It is in Johnson's favour that Antony should contemplate some such entertainment at lines 33-34, *infra*.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT IV

Wash the congealment from your wounds and kiss 10
The honour'd gashes whole. [To *Scarus*] Give me thy
hand;

Enter CLEOPATRA, attended

To this great fairy I'll commend thy acts,
Make her thanks bless thee. O thou day o' the world,
Chain mine arm'd neck; leap thou, attire and all,
Through proof of harness to my heart, and there
Ride on the pants triumphing!

CLEO. Lord of lords!
O infinite virtue, comest thou smiling from
The world's great snare uncaught?

ANT. My nightingale,
We have beat them to their beds. What, girl! though
grey
Do something mingle with our younger brown, yet ha'
we

A brain that nourishes our nerves and can
Get goal for goal of youth. Behold this man;
Commend unto his lips thy favouring hand:
Kiss it, my warrior: he hath fought to-day
As if a god in hate of mankind had
Destroy'd in such a shape.

CLEO. I'll give thee, friend,
An armour all of gold; it was a king's.

13 *day o' the world*] light of the world.

15 *Through proof of harness*] Through armour of proof.

22 *Get goal for goal of youth*] Win as many goals (in athletic sports) as young men.

SCENE IX ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

ANT. He has deserved it, were it carbuncled
 Like holy Phœbus' car. Give me thy hand :
 Through Alexandria make a jolly march ; 30
 Bear our hack'd targets like the men that owe them :
 Had our great palace the capacity
 To camp this host, we all would sup together
 And drink carouses to the next day's fate,
 Which promises royal peril. Trumpeters,
 With brazen din blast you the city's ear ;
 Make mingle with our rattling tabourines ;
 That heaven and earth may strike their sounds together,
 Applauding our approach [Exeunt.]

SCENE IX — CÆSAR'S CAMP

Sentinels at their post

FIRST SOLD. If we be not relieved within this hour,
 We must return to the court of guard : the night
 Is shiny, and they say we shall embattle
 By the second hour i' the morn.

SEC. SOLD. This last day was
 A shrewd one to 's.

28-29 *carbuncled . . . car*] Cf. *Cymb.*, V, v, 189-190: "a carbuncle Of
Phœbus' wheel." Ovid describes the jewels of Phœbus' golden car
 in *Metam.*, ii, 144-148.

31 *our hack'd targets . . . owe them*] our shields which are hacked about
 like the men who own them.

37 *tabourines*] kettledrums.

2 *the court of guard*] the guard-room. Cf. *Othello*, II, i, 215.

3 *embattle*] take our positions in the field.

5 *shrewd*] cursed, disastrous.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT IV

Enter ENOBARBUS

ENO. O, bear me witness, night, —

THIRD SOLD. What man is this?

SEC. SOLD. Stand close, and list him.

ENO. Be witness to me, O thou blessed moon,
When men revolted shall upon record
Bear hateful memory, poor Enobarbus did
Before thy face repent!

FIRST SOLD. Enobarbus!

THIRD SOLD. Peace!

10

Hark further.

ENO. O sovereign mistress of true melancholy,
The poisonous damp of night disponge upon me,
That life, a very rebel to my will,
May hang no longer on me: throw my heart
Against the flint and hardness of my fault;
Which, being dried with grief, will break to powder,
And finish all foul thoughts. O Antony,
Nobler than my revolt is infamous,
Forgive me in thine own particular,
But let the world rank me in register
A master-leaver and a fugitive:

20

O Antony! O Antony!

[Dies.

6 *list*] listen to, overhear.

12 *O sovereign mistress of true melancholy*] Enobarbus is continuing his address to the moon, which he begins at line 7.

13 *disponge*] discharge like a squeezed sponge.

20 *in thine own particular*] as far as you are individually concerned. Cf.

I, iii, 54, *supra*: "My more particular."

21 *rank me in register*] make formal record of me.

SCENE X ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

SEC. SOLD. Let's speak to him.

FIRST SOLD. Let's hear him, for the things he speaks
May concern Cæsar.

THIRD SOLD. Let's do so. But he sleeps.

FIRST SOLD. Swoons rather; for so bad a prayer as
his

Was never yet for sleep.

SEC. SOLD. Go we to him.

THIRD SOLD. Awake, sir, awake; speak to us.

SEC. SOLD. Hear you, sir?

FIRST SOLD. The hand of death hath raught him.

[*Drums afar off.*] Hark! the drums

Demurely wake the sleepers. Let us bear him 30
To the court of guard; he is of note: our hour
Is fully out.

THIRD SOLD. Come on, then; he may recover yet.

[*Exeunt with the body.*]

SCENE X — BETWEEN THE TWO CAMPS

Enter ANTONY and SCARUS, with their Army

ANT. Their preparation is to-day by sea;
We please them not by land.

SCAR. For both, my lord.

27 *Was never yet for sleep*] Was never yet said for the sake of (procur-
ing) sleep.

29 *raught*] an archaic form of "reached."

30 *Demurely*] In subdued fashion.

2 *For both, my lord*] Scarus means that the enemy is preparing to fight
both by sea and land.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT IV

ANT. I would they 'ld fight i' the fire or i' the air;
We 'ld fight there too. But this it is; our foot
Upon the hills adjoining to the city
Shall stay with us: order for sea is given;
They have put forth the haven
Where their appointment we may best discover
And look on their endeavour. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE XI.—ANOTHER PART OF THE SAME

Enter CÆSAR, and his Army

CÆS. But being charged, we will be still by land,
Which, as I take 't, we shall; for his best force
Is forth to man his galleys. To the vales,
And hold our best advantage. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE XII—HILLS ADJOINING TO ALEXANDRIA

Enter ANTONY and SCARUS

ANT. Yet they are not join'd: where yond pine does
stand,
I shall discover all: I'll bring thee word
Straight, how 't is like to go. [*Exit.*]
SCAR. Swallows have built

7 *They have put forth the haven . . .*] Thus the Folios. The line is metrically imperfect. Some such words as *we'll take our stand* or *let us forward* would seem to be omitted.

SCENE XI, 1 *But being charged . . . land*] Unless we be charged, we shall be undisturbed by land.

SCENE XII ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

In Cleopatra's sails their nests: the augurers
 Say they know not, they cannot tell; look grimly
 And dare not speak their knowledge. Antony
 Is valiant, and dejected, and by starts
 His fretted fortunes give him hope, and fear,
 Of what he has, and has not.

[*Alarum afar off, as at a sea-fight.*]

Re-enter ANTONY

ANT. All is lost;
 This foul Egyptian hath betrayed me: 10
 My fleet hath yielded to the foe; and yonder
 They cast their caps up and carouse together
 Like friends long lost. Triple-turn'd whore! 't is thou
 Hast sold me to this novice, and my heart
 Makes only wars on thee. Bid them all fly;
 For when I am revenged upon my charm,
 I have done all. Bid them all fly; begone. [*Exit Scarus.*]
 O sun, thy uprise shall I see no more:
 Fortune and Antony part here, even here
 Do we shake hands. All come to this? The hearts 20
 That spaniel'd me at heels, to whom I gave
 Their wishes, do discandy, melt their sweets

SCENE XII, 4 *augurers*] Capell's correction of the Folio reading *Auguries*.

13 *Triple-turn'd*] Thrice faithless. Antony has already denounced Cleopatra, at III, xiii, 116-120, *supra*, as a false mistress of three men, Julius Cæsar, Cneius Pompeius, and himself.

16 *my charm*] the woman who has bewitched me.

21 *spaniel'd*] fawned like spaniels. Hanmer's happy correction of the unintelligible Folio reading *pannelled*.

22 *discandy*] melt like spoiled sugar-candy. Cf. III, xiii, 165, *supra*, and note. It is worth observing that, elsewhere, Shakespeare in describing

On blossoming Cæsar; and this pine is bark'd,
That overtopp'd them all. Betray'd I am.
O this false soul of Egypt! this grave charm,
Whose eye beck'd forth my wars and call'd them
home,
Whose bosom was my crownet, my chief end,
Like a right gipsy hath at fast and loose
Beguiled me to the very heart of loss.
What, Eros, Eros!

Enter CLEOPATRA

Ah, thou spell! Avaunt!

30

CLEO. Why is my lord enraged against his love?

ANT. Vanish, or I shall give thee thy deserving,
And blemish Cæsar's triumph. Let him take thee,
And hoist thee up to the shouting plebeians:
Follow his chariot, like the greatest spot
Of all thy sex: most monster-like, be shown
For poor'st diminutives, for doits; and let

false flattery figuratively identifies the fawning obsequiousness of dogs with the over sweetness of sugar candy. Cf. *1 Hen. IV*, I, iii, 251-252: "Why, what a *candy* deal of courtesy This *fawning greyhound* then did proffer me!"

25 *this grave charm*] probably this charmer with the grave, gipsy eyes, which prove so alluringly delusive.

26 *beck'd forth my wars*] called forth by beckoning my fighting powers.

27 *crownet*] coronet, crown.

28 *fast and loose*] a cheating game played by real gipsies at a fair. See note on *L. L. L.*, I, ii, 149.

29 *to the very heart of loss*] to the utmost possible loss.

34 *plebeians*] accented on the first syllable.

35 *spot*] defilement, disgrace.

37 *For poor'st diminutives*] For the delight of the meanest and stupidest

SCENE XII ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Patient Octavia plough thy visage up
With her prepared nails. [Exit Cleopatra.]

'T is well thou'rt gone,
If it be well to live; but better 't were 40
Thou fell'st into my fury, for one death
Might have prevented many. Eros, ho!
The shirt of Nessus is upon me: teach me,
Alcides, thou mine ancestor, thy rage:
Let me lodge Lichas on the horns o' the moon,
And with those hands that grasp'd the heaviest club

of the rabble. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, V, i, 31-32: "waterflies, diminutives of nature."

for doits] for very small coins. Warburton's correction of the Folio reading *for Dolts*. But there is little reason why Antony should taunt Cleopatra with the prospect of being exhibited to spectators at a farthing a head. He is contemplating her being dragged by Cæsar in his triumphal procession, and being shown gratis to the Roman mob. The old reading *for Dolts* seems to harmonise with "diminutives" better than the new.

39 *prepared*] ready for the fray.

40-42 *better 't were . . . many*] it were better thou hadst fallen a victim to my fury; i. e., when I first mistrusted thee. Cf. III, xiii, 85 *seq.* There would not have been any fighting for thee afterwards, and so thy death would have prevented others from dying.

43-45 *The shirt of Nessus . . . o' the moon*] Hercules, or Alcides, from whom Antony claims descent, died of the torments due to the poisoned shirt which the centaur Nessus gave his wife for him to wear. Hercules in his dying agonies killed his page Lichas, who had brought him the fatal garment, by hurling him into the air. Cf. the account of the incident given by Seneca in *Hercules Œtæus*, 815-822, where it is said of the dead body of Lichas: "In astra missus fertur, et nubes vago Spargit cruore" (He is hurled to the stars and sprinkles the clouds with his scattering gore).

44 *Alcides, thou mine ancestor*] See note on I, iii, 84, *supra*, where Antony

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT IV

Subdue my worthiest self. The witch shall die
To the young Roman boy she hath sold me, and I fall
Under this plot: she dies for 't. Eros, ho! [Exit.

SCENE XIII — ALEXANDRIA

CLEOPATRA'S PALACE

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and MARDIAN

CLEO. Help me, my women! O, he is more mad
Than Telamon for his shield; the boar of Thessaly
Was never so emboss'd.

CHAR. To the monument!

is called "Herculean Roman." Cf. also, IV, iii, 16, *supra*: "the god Hercules, whom Antony loved."

47 *Subdue my worthiest self*] Get into my control that noblest part of my being (of which Cleopatra's spell has robbed me).

48 *Roman boy*] Cf. for this sneer at Octavius, III, xiii, 17 and IV, i, 1, *supra*.

1-2 *he is more mad . . . for his shield*] Ajax, the son of Telamon, who disputed with Ulysses as to who should possess the armour and shield of Achilles, and went mad when the award was given against him. Cf. Ovid, *Metam.*, xiii, 2 *seq.* The shield of Achilles, which caused Ajax's madness is to be distinguished from "the sevenfold shield of Ajax" which was already a part of that hero's equipment, and to which Antony refers IV, xiv, 38, *infra*.

2 *the boar of Thessaly*] the boar which infested Calydon, a district strictly speaking in Aetolia, not in Thessaly, which was slain by Meleager. Cf. Ovid, *Metam.*, viii, 284-286, for a description of the boar, which Shakespeare imitated in *Venus and Adonis*, 619-621.

3 *emboss'd*] covered with foam; commonly used of animals hard driven in the chase. Cf. *T. of Shrew*, *Induction*, Sc. i, line 17.

To the monument] According to Plutarch, Cleopatra had erected "sumptuous tombs and monuments . . . hard to the temple of Isis."

SCENE XIV ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

There lock yourself, and send him word you are dead.
The soul and body rive not more in parting
Than greatness going off.

CLEO. To the monument!
Mardian, go tell him I have slain myself;
Say that the last I spoke was "Antony,"
And word it, prithee, piteously: hence, Mardian,
And bring me how he takes my death. To the monu-
ment! [Exeunt. 10]

SCENE XIV THE SAME

ANOTHER ROOM

Enter ANTONY and EROS

ANT. Eros, thou yet behold'st me?

EROS. Ay, noble lord.

ANT. Sometime we see a cloud that's dragonish,
A vapour sometime like a bear or lion,
A tower'd citadel, a pendent rock,
A forked mountain, or blue promontory
With trees upon 't, that nod unto the world,
And mock our eyes with air: thou hast seen these signs;
They are black vesper's pageants.

5-6 *The soul and body . . . going off*] The soul and body do not split asunder with greater violence than power in the act of falling. Char-
mian means that fallen greatness is hardly to be less dreaded than
death. Cf. *Hen. VIII*, II, iii, 15-16: "a sufferance panging *As soul*
and body's severing."

SCENE XIV, 2 *dragonish*] shaped like a dragon.

8 *pageants*] a term specifically applied to the artificial presentations of

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT IV

EROS.

Ay, my lord.

ANT. That which is now a horse, even with a thought
The rack dislimns and makes it indistinct 10
As water is in water.

EROS.

It does, my lord.

ANT. My good knave Eros, now thy captain is
Even such a body: here I am Antony,
Yet cannot hold this visible shape, my knave.
I made these wars for Egypt; and the queen —
Whose heart I thought I had, for she had mine,
Which, whilst it was mine, had annex'd unto 't
A million moe, now lost, — she, Eros, has
Pack'd cards with Cæsar, and false-play'd my glory
Unto an enemy's triumph. 20
Nay, weep not, gentle Eros; there is left us
Ourselves to end ourselves.

castles, dragons, and the like, which formed part of ancient shows and ceremonial processions. Cf. Bishop Hall's *Sermon* quoted by Boswell: "I feare some of you are like the *pageants* of your great solemnities, wherein there is a show of a solid body, whether of a lyon or elephant, or unicorne; but if they be look'd into, there is nothing but cloth, and sticks, and ayre."

9 *even with a thought*] quick as thought. Cf. *Jul. Cæs.*, V, iii, 19.

10 *The rack dislimns*] The floating wreath of cloud blots or effaces (it).

12 *My good knave*] A friendly term of address.

19-20 *Pack'd cards with Cæsar . . . triumph*] Fraudulently arranged or dealt the cards in collusion with Cæsar, and cheated me out of my glory, in order to secure my enemy's triumph. Some commentators think that "triumph" implies an illusion to the trump-card which had fallen to Cæsar's hand.

SCENE XIV ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Enter MARDIAN

O, thy vile lady!

She has robb'd me of my sword.

MAR. No, Antony;
My mistress loved thee, and her fortunes mingled
With thine entirely.

ANT. Hence, saucy eunuch; peace!
She hath betray'd me, and shall die the death.

MAR. Death of one person can be paid but once,
And that she has discharged: what thou wouldst do
Is done unto thy hand: the last she spake
Was "Antony! most noble Antony!"

30

Then in the midst a tearing groan did break
The name of Antony; it was divided
Between her heart and lips: she render'd life,
Thy name so buried in her.

ANT. Dead then?

MAR. Dead.

ANT. Unarm, Eros; the long day's task is done,
And we must sleep. [*To Mar.*] That thou depart'st hence
safe,

Does pay thy labour richly; go. [*Exit Mardian.*]

Off, pluck off:

The seven-fold shield of Ajax cannot keep

35 *Unarm*] Thus the Folios. Rowe read *Unarm me*, which makes the
sense slightly clearer.

38 *seven-fold shield*] This is the "clipeus septemplex" of Ovid, *Metam.*,
xiii, 2, which Ajax commonly used in battle. Cf. IV, xiii, 1-2,
supra, and note.

The battery from my heart. O, cleave, my sides!
Heart, once be stronger than thy continent, 40
Crack thy frail case! Apace, Eros, apace!
No more a soldier. Bruised pieces, go;
You have been nobly borne. From me awhile.

[*Exit Eros.*]

I will o'ertake thee, Cleopatra, and
Weep for my pardon. So it must be, for now
All length is torture: since the torch is out,
Lie down and stray no farther: now all labour
Mars what it does; yea, very force entangles
Itself with strength: seal then, and all is done.
Eros! — I come, my queen. Eros! — Stay for me: 50
Where souls do couch on flowers, we'll hand in hand,
And with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze:
Dido and her Æneas shall want troops,
And all the haunt be ours. Come, Eros, Eros!

39 *battery*] assault (of despair).

40 *thy continent*] that which contains or holds thee.

42 *Bruised pieces*] The bruised armour which Eros is removing.

46 *All length*] All prolongation of existence.

47-48 *all labour Mars what it does*] The general meaning is that all labour is impotent to effect anything, all exertion of strength defeats its own purpose. Cf. *Sonnet* xxiii, 4-8: "strength's abundance weakens his own heart, . . . O'ercharged with burden of my own love's might."

49 *seal then*] put the finishing touch to the deed; a legal term.

53 *Dido and her Æneas . . . troops*] Dido and Æneas, hitherto the most conspicuous pair of lovers in Elysium, shall henceforth want their troops of admirers. Shakespeare overlooks the circumstance that according to Virgil (*Æneid*, vi, 473-474), Dido's only companion in Hades was not Æneas but her lawful husband Sychæus.

SCENE XIV ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Re-enter EROS

EROS. What would my lord?

ANT. Since Cleopatra died
I have lived in such dishonour that the gods
Detest my baseness. I, that with my sword
Quarter'd the world, and o'er green Neptune's back
With ships made cities, condemn myself to lack
The courage of a woman; less noble mind 60
Than she which by her death our Cæsar tells
"I am conqueror of myself." Thou art sworn, Eros,
That, when the exigent should come — which now
Is come indeed — when I should see behind me
The inevitable prosecution of
Disgrace and horror, that, on my command,
Thou then wouldst kill me: do 't; the time is come:
Thou strikest not me, 't is Cæsar thou defeat'st.
Put colour in thy cheek.

EROS. The gods withhold me!
Shall I do that which all the Parthian darts, 70
Though enemy, lost aim and could not?

ANT. Eros,
Wouldst thou be window'd in great Rome, and see

59—60 *condemn myself . . . mind*] The construction here is somewhat elliptical. But Shakespeare is following Plutarch's words in North's translation very closely: "I am indeed *condemned* to be judged of *less courage and noble mind than a woman*."

63 *exigent*] extremity.

65 *prosecution*] pursuit.

70 *Parthian darts*] Cf. III, i, 1: "*darting Parthia*," and note.

72 *window'd*] looking from a window.

Thy master thus with pleach'd arms, bending down
His corrigible neck, his face subdued
To penetrative shame, whilst the wheel'd seat
Of fortunate Cæsar, drawn before him, branded
His baseness that ensued?

EROS. I would not see 't.

ANT. Come, then; for with a wound I must be cured.
Draw that thy honest sword, which thou hast worn
Most useful for thy country.

EROS. O, sir, pardon me! 80

ANT. When I did make thee free, swore'st thou not
then

To do this when I bade thee? Do it at once;
Or thy precedent services are all
But accidents unpurposed. Draw, and come.

EROS. Turn from me then that noble countenance,
Wherein the worship of the whole world lies.

ANT. Lo thee! [Turning from him.

EROS. My sword is drawn.

ANT. Then let it do at once
The thing why thou hast drawn it.

EROS. My dear master,
My captain, and my emperor, let me say,
Before I strike this bloody stroke, farewell. 90

ANT. 'T is said, man; and farewell.

EROS. Farewell, great chief. Shall I strike now?

73 *pleach'd*] folded.

74 *corrigible*] subjected to correction or punishment.

75 *penetrative*] penetrating.

76-77 *branded . . . ensued*] branded the baseness of him who followed.

86 *worship*] reverence.

SCENE XIV ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

ANT.

Now, Eros.

EROS. Why, there then: thus I do escape the sorrow
Of Antony's death. [Kills himself.]

ANT. Thrice-nobler than myself!

Thou teachest me, O valiant Eros, what
I should and thou couldst not. My queen and Eros
Have by their brave instruction got upon me
A nobleness in record: but I will be
A bridegroom in my death, and run into't 100
As to a lover's bed. Come then; and, Eros,
Thy master dies thy scholar: to do thus

[Falling on his sword.]
I learn'd of thee. How! not dead? not dead?
The guard, ho! O, dispatch me!

Enter DERCETAS and Guard

FIRST GUARD. What's the noise?

ANT. I have done my work ill, friends: O, make an
end

Of what I have begun.

SEC. GUARD. The star is fall'n.

FIRST GUARD. And time is at his period.

ALL. Alas, and woe!

ANT. Let him that loves me strike me dead.

FIRST GUARD. Not I.

SEC. GUARD. Nor I.

THIRD GUARD. Nor any one. [Exeunt Guard. 110]

98-99 *got upon me . . . in record*] gained advantage of me in the record of nobleness.

99-101 *I will be . . . lover's bed*] Cf. *Meas. for Meas.*, III, i, 84-86: "If I must die, I will encounter darkness as a bride, And hug it in my arms."

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT IV

DER. Thy death and fortunes bid thy followers fly.
This sword but shown to Cæsar, with this tidings,
Shall enter me with him.

Enter DIOMEDES

DIO. Where 's Antony?

DER. There, Diomed, there.

DIO. Lives he?

Wilt thou not answer, man? [Exit Dercetas.]

ANT. Art thou there, Diomed? Draw thy sword,
and give me

Sufficing strokes for death.

DIO. Most absolute lord,

My mistress Cleopatra sent me to thee.

ANT. When did she send thee?

DIO. Now, my lord.

ANT. Where is she?

DIO. Lock'd in her monument. She had a prophesy-
ing fear

120

Of what hath come to pass: for when she saw —
Which never shall be found — you did suspect
She had disposed with Cæsar, and that your rage
Would not be purged, she sent you word she was dead;
But, fearing since how it might work, hath sent
Me to proclaim the truth; and I am come,
I dread, too late.

ANT. Too late, good Diomed: call my guard, I
prithee.

113 *Shall enter me with him*] Shall gain me entry into his confidence or
favour.

123 *disposed with*] arranged, made terms with.

SCENE XV ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

DIO. What, ho, the emperor's guard! The guard,
what, ho!
Come, your lord calls.

130

Enter four or five of the Guard of Antony

ANT. Bear me, good friends, where Cleopatra bides;
'T is the last service that I shall command you.

FIRST GUARD. Woe, woe are we, sir, you may not
live to wear

All your true followers out.

ALL. Most heavy day!

ANT. Nay, good my fellows, do not please sharp
fate

To grace it with your sorrows: bid that welcome
Which comes to punish us, and we punish it
Seeming to bear it lightly. Take me up:
I have led you oft: carry me now, good friends,
And have my thanks for all. *[Exeunt, bearing Antony. 140]*

SCENE XV — THE SAME

A MONUMENT

Enter CLEOPATRA, and her maids aloft, with CHARMIAN, and IRAS

CLEO. O Charmian, I will never go from hence.

CHAR. Be comforted, dear madam.

CLEO. No, I will not:

All strange and terrible events are welcome,
But comforts we despise; our size of sorrow,

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT IV

Proportion'd to our cause, must be as great
As that which makes it.

Enter, below, DIOMEDES

How now! is he dead?

DIO. His death 's upon him, but not dead.
Look out o' the other side your monument;
His guard have brought him thither.

Enter, below, ANTONY, borne by the Guard

CLEO.

O sun,

Burn the great sphere thou movest in! darkling stand ¹⁰
The varying shore o' the world. O Antony,
Antony, Antony! Help, Charmian, help, Iras, help;
Help, friends below; let 's draw him hither.

ANT.

Peace!

Not Cæsar's valour hath o'erthrown Antony,
But Antony's hath triumph'd on itself.

CLEO. So it should be, that none but Antony
Should conquer Antony; but woe 't is so!

ANT. I am dying, Egypt, dying; only
I here importune death awhile, until

¹⁰ *the great sphere*] the crystalline sphere in which the sun, like the other heavenly bodies was supposed to be encased. See note on III, xiii, 146.

¹¹ *The varying shore o' the world*] The irregularly outlined shore of the earth, with its nooks and corners. The phrase is difficult. The change of *shore* into *star* gives a simpler meaning, and may well be right. "The varying star" would be equivalent to "the inconstant moon" of *Rom. and Jul.*, II, ii, 109, or "the fleeting moon" of V, ii, 239, *infra*.

¹⁹ *importune death*] intreat delay of death.

Of many thousand kisses the poor last 20
I lay upon thy lips.

CLEO. I dare not, dear,
Dear my lord, pardon, I dare not,
Lest I be taken: not the imperious show
Of the full-fortuned Cæsar ever shall
Be brooch'd with me; if knife, drugs, serpents, have
Edge, sting, or operation, I am safe:
Your wife Octavia, with her modest eyes
And still conclusion, shall acquire no honour
Demuring upon me. But come, come, Antony, —
Help me, my women, — we must draw thee up; 30
Assist, good friends.

ANT. O, quick, or I am gone.

CLEO. Here 's sport indeed! How heavy weighs my
lord!

Our strength is all gone into heaviness;
That makes the weight. Had I great Juno's power,
The strong-wing'd Mercury should fetch thee up
And set thee by Jove's side. Yet come a little —
Wishers were ever fools — O, come, come, come;

[*They heave Antony aloft to Cleopatra.*]

23 *imperious show*] imperial show or pageant.

25 *brooch'd*] ornamented as with a brooch.

28 *still conclusion*] sedate observation. The phrase is difficult. Probably the notion is that Octavia will be quietly drawing her inferences.

29 *Demuring*] Looking demurely and deprecatingly. Cf. V, ii, 54-55, *infra*.

32 *Here 's sport indeed!*] This exclamation of irony — a heart-breaking effort at merriment — is Cleopatra's piteous confession of consciousness that her life of laughter and self-indulgence is ending.

33 *heaviness*] used here equivocally for both "grief" and "weight."

And welcome, welcome! die where thou hast lived:
Quicken with kissing: had my lips that power,
Thus would I wear them out.

ALL. A heavy sight!

ANT. I am dying, Egypt, dying:
Give me some wine, and let me speak a little.

CLEO. No, let me speak, and let me rail so high,
That the false housewife Fortune break her wheel,
Provoked by my offence.

ANT. One word, sweet queen:
Of Cæsar seek your honour, with your safety. O!

CLEO. They do not go together.

ANT. Gentle, hear me:
None about Cæsar trust but Proculeius.

CLEO. My resolution and my hands I'll trust;
None about Cæsar.

ANT. The miserable change now at my end
Lament nor sorrow at, but please your thoughts
In feeding them with those my former fortunes
Wherein I lived, the greatest prince o' the world,
The noblest, and do now not basely die,
Not cowardly put off my helmet to

38 *where thou*] Pope's correction of the Folio *when thou*.

39 *Quicken with kissing*] Revive with my kisses.

43 *so high*] so loudly.

44 *the false housewife . . . wheel*] "housewife" is here used contemptuously like "hussy." Cf. *Hen. V*, V, i, 74: "Doth *Fortune* play the *huswife* with me now." "Fortune" is constantly associated with a wheel by Shakespeare. Cf. *Hen. V*, III, vi, 31-33: "Fortune . . . is painted also with a *wheel*, to signify to you, . . . that she is turning, and inconstant."

SCENE XV ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

My countryman, a Roman by a Roman
Valiantly vanquish'd. Now my spirit is going;
I can no more.

CLEO. Noblest of men, woo 't die?
Hast thou no care of me? shall I abide 60
In this dull world, which in thy absence is
No better than a sty? O, see, my women, [*Antony dies.*
The crown o' the earth doth melt. My lord!
O, wither'd is the garland of the war,
The soldier's pole is fall'n: young boys and girls
Are level now with men; the odds is gone,
And there is nothing left remarkable
Beneath the visiting moon. [*Faints.*

CHAR. O, quietness, lady!

IRAS. She's dead too, our sovereign.

CHAR. Lady!

IRAS. Madam!

CHAR. O madam, madam, madam! 70

IRAS. Royal Egypt, Empress!

CHAR. Peace, peace, Iras!

CLEO. No more, but e'en a woman, and commanded
By such poor passion as the maid that milks
And does the meanest chares. It were for me

59 *woo 't die*] wilt thou die? Cf. IV, ii, 7, *supra*.

64 *garland*] crowning ornament.

65 *soldier's pole*] standard, banner.

66 *the odds*] all sign of inequality.

73 *e'en a woman*] Capell's correction of the Folio reading *in a woman*.
commanded] controlled.

75 *charges*] household jobs, as in "*char-woman*." Cf. V, ii, 230, *infra*:
"this *chare*." The word is still used in America in the form "chores."

To throw my sceptre at the injurious gods,
 To tell them that this world did equal theirs
 Till they had stol'n our jewel. All's but naught;
 Patience is sottish, and impatience does
 Become a dog that's mad: then is it sin 80
 To rush into the secret house of death,
 Ere death dare come to us? How do you, women?
 What, what! good cheer! Why, how now, Charmian!
 My noble girls! Ah, women, women, look,
 Our lamp is spent, it's out! Good sirs, take heart:
 We'll bury him; and then, what's brave, what's noble,
 Let's do it after the high Roman fashion,
 And make death proud to take us. Come, away:
 This case of that huge spirit now is cold:
 Ah, women, women! Come; we have no friend 90
 But resolution and the briefest end.

[*Exeunt: those above bearing off Antony's body.*

79-80 *impatience does Become*] impatience only befits.

85 *Good sirs*] Cleopatra is still addressing her waiting-women, who were often so addressed in the Elizabethan drama. Cf. V, ii, 228, *infra*:
 "sirrah Iras."



ACT FIFTH — SCENE I — ALEXANDRIA

CÆSAR'S CAMP

Enter CÆSAR, AGRIPPA, DOLABELLA, MÆCENAS, GALLUS, PROCULEIUS, and others, his council of war

CÆSAR



O TO HIM, DOLABELLA,
bid him yield;
Being so frustrate, tell him he
mocks
The pauses that he makes.

DOL. Cæsar, I shall.

[*Exit.*

*Enter DERCETAS, with the sword of
Antony*

CÆS. Wherefore is that? and
what art thou that darest
Appear thus to us?

DER. I am call'd Dercetas;

Mark Antony I served, who best was worthy
Best to be served: whilst he stood up and spoke,

ACT V Sc. 1 (Stage Direction) *Enter Cæsar . . . Mæcenas*] For
Mæcenas the Folios read *Menas*, a character who has only figured in

He was my master, and I wore my life
To spend upon his haters. If thou please
To take me to thee, as I was to him
I'll be to Cæsar; if thou pleasest not,
I yield thee up my life.

10

CÆS. What is 't thou say'st?

DER. I say, O Cæsar, Antony is dead.

CÆS. The breaking of so great a thing should make
A greater crack: the round world
Should have shook lions into civil streets,
And citizens to their dens. The death of Antony
Is not a single doom; in the name lay
A moiety of the world.

DER. He is dead, Cæsar;

the early scenes of the play, I, iv, 48, etc., as a friend of Pompey. He was not one of Octavius Cæsar's followers. The two speeches allotted to him in this scene are in the Folios headed "Mec." Mæcenas, the literary patron and firm supporter of Octavius Cæsar, is certainly intended.

2-3 *Being so frustrate . . . makes*] Being so utterly defeated, tell him that the delays he makes in submitting to us are mere mockery. Thus the Folios. For *he mocks* numerous editors substitute *he mocks us by*. But the Folio text, though elliptical, is intelligible.

5 *thus*] with a drawn and bloody sword.

14-17 *The breaking . . . dens*] The meaning is obvious, that the death of so great a man ought to have been announced in more thunderous and more startling tones. A dislocation of the whole universe might have been expected; wild animals ought to have overspread civilised states and driven citizens into the dens of lions. Line 15 ("A greater crack: the round world") is metrically defective. But there is no reason to accept the view that some words have dropped out.

18 *a single doom*] a death of an individual.

Not by a public minister of justice, 20
Nor by a hired knife; but that self hand,
Which writ his honour in the acts it did,
Hath, with the courage which the heart did lend it,
Splitted the heart. This is his sword;
I robb'd his wound of it; behold it stain'd
With his most noble blood.

CÆS. Look you sad, friends?
The gods rebuke me, but it is tidings
To wash the eyes of kings.

AGR. And strange 't is
That nature must compel us to lament
Our most persisted deeds.

MÆC. His taints and honours 30
Waged equal with him.

AGR. A rarer spirit never
Did steer humanity: but you, gods, will give us
Some faults to make us men. Cæsar is touch'd.

21 *self*] self-same.

27-28 *but it is tidings . . . eyes*] if this be not tidings to make wet the eyes. "Tidings" is commonly used as a singular noun. Cf. IV, xiv, 112, *supra*: "this *tidings*."

28-30 *And strange it is . . . persisted deeds*] The Folios erroneously assign this speech to Dolabella, who has already left the scene (line 3, *supra*). Theobald made "Agrippa" the speaker. Other editors prefer to continue this speech to "Cæsar." "Our most persisted deeds" means "deeds to which we devote our energy most pertinaciously."

31 *Waged equal with him*] Equally balanced each other (like the counterparts of an even wager). Cf. *Pericles*, IV, ii, 30: "the commodity *wages* not with the danger." For the First Folio reading *wag'd*, the Second Folio substituted *way*, i. e., weigh, which simplifies the sense.

MÆC. When such a spacious mirror's set before
him,

He needs must see himself.

CÆS. O Antony!

I have follow'd thee to this. But we do lance
Diseases in our bodies: I must perforce
Have shown to thee such a declining day,
Or look on thine; we could not stall together
In the whole world: but yet let me lament,
With tears as sovereign as the blood of hearts,
That thou, my brother, my competitor
In top of all design, my mate in empire,
Friend and companion in the front of war,
The arm of mine own body and the heart
Where mine his thoughts did kindle, that our stars
Unreconcilable should divide
Our equalness to this. Hear me, good friends, —

40

36-37 *I have follow'd thee . . . bodies*] I have pursued thee till I compelled thee to self-destruction. But I have caused thy ruin on the principle that the operation of lancing or cutting is applicable to diseases incurable by other means. In the Folios *lance* is spelt *launch*, a spelling which gives the old pronunciation of the word.

38-39 *such a declining day . . . thine*] such a ruin of fortune, or be a spectator of thy fall. Hanmer needlessly read *look'd* for *look*.

42-43 *my competitor . . . design*] my colleague or partner in all the highest ambitions.

45-46 *and the heart . . . did kindle*] and the inspiring heart at which or whereby my heart kindled its thoughts or aspirations.

46-48 *that our stars . . . to this*] (let me lament) that our stars incapable of harmonious action should have rent asunder our equality of fortune and brought our relationship to this end.

SCENE I ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Enter an Egyptian

But I will tell you at some meeter season:
The business of this man looks out of him; 50
We 'll hear him what he says. Whence are you?

EGYPT. A poor Egyptian yet. The queen my mistress,
Confined in all she has, her monument,
Of thy intents desires instruction,
That she preparedly may frame herself
To the way she 's forced to.

CÆS. Bid her have good heart:
She soon shall know of us, by some of ours,
How honourable and how kindly we
Determine for her; for Cæsar cannot live
To be ungentle.

EGYPT. So the gods preserve thee! [Exit. 60

CÆS. Come hither, Proculeius. Go and say,
We purpose her no shame: give her what comforts
The quality of her passion shall require,
Lest in her greatness by some mortal stroke
She do defeat us; for her life in Rome
Would be eternal in our triumph: go,

50 *The business . . . out of him*] The look of this man suggests urgent business. Cf. *Macb.*, I, ii, 47: "What a haste *looks* through his eyes!"

53 *her monument*] the tomb she has built for herself. Cf. IV, xiii, 3, *supra*.

59 *cannot live*] Rowe's correction of the Folio reading *cannot leaue*, which is unintelligible. Some editors adopt *cannot learn*. Cf. III, xiii, 55, *supra*.

65-66 *for her life . . . triumph*] for (if she die now she will be forgotten and my glory will be diminished, whereas) she will live forever in history if in Rome she attend my triumph.

And with your speediest bring us what she says
And how you find of her.

CÆS. Gallus, go you along. [*Exit Gallus.*] Where's Dolabella,

ALL. Dolabella !

70

CÆS. Let him alone, for I remember now
How he's employ'd: he shall in time be ready.
Go with me to my tent; where you shall see
How hardly I was drawn into this war;
How calm and gentle I proceeded still
In all my writings: go with me, and see
What I can show in this.

[*Exeunt.*]

THE MONUMENT

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, *and* IRAS

CLEO. My desolation does begin to make
A better life. 'T is paltry to be Cæsar;
Not being Fortune, he's but Fortune's knave,
A minister of her will: and it is great
To do that thing that ends all other deeds;
Which shackles accidents and bolts up change;
Which sleeps, and never palates more the dug,
The beggar's nurse and Cæsar's.

3 *Fortune's knave*] Fortune's servant.

6 bolts up change] bars, and thus stops or prevents, all change of fortune.

7-8 *Which sleeps . . . and Cæsar's*] A difficult and elliptical passage.

"Palates" means "tastes." *The dug* is Theobald's substitution for

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Enter, to the gates of the monument, PROCULEIUS, GALLUS, and Soldiers

PRO. Cæsar sends greeting to the Queen of Egypt,
And bids thee study on what fair demands 10
Thou mean'st to have him grant thee.

CLEO. What's thy name?

PRO. My name is Proculeius.

CLEO. Antony

Did tell me of you, bade me trust you, but
I do not greatly care to be deceived,
That have no use for trusting. If your master
Would have a queen his beggar, you must tell him,
That majesty, to keep decorum, must
No less beg than a kingdom: if he please
To give me conquer'd Egypt for my son,
He gives me so much of mine own as I 20
Will kneel to him with thanks.

PRO. Be of good cheer;
You're fall'n into a princely hand; fear nothing:

the dung of the Folios. Though there is a natural association between "dug" and "nurse," it seems far-fetched to credit Cleopatra with talking of the milk which the mother gives her babe as the nurse or nourishment alike of the poorest and greatest human being, as the universal sustenance of adults. The Folio reading *dung* may well be defended as a somewhat contemptuous expression for the fertilising fruits of the earth. Cf. I, i, 35-36, *supra*: "our *dungy* earth alike Feeds beast as man." Cleopatra probably means here that suicide produces a state of being which merely sleeps and has no further need of any earthly food.

14 *I do not . . . deceived*] I do not much mind being deceived.

18 *No less beg*] Beg nothing less.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT V

Make your full reference freely to my lord,
 Who is so full of grace that it flows over
 On all that need. Let me report to him
 Your sweet dependency, and you shall find
 A conqueror that will pray in aid for kindness,
 Where he for grace is kneel'd to.

CLEO. Pray you, tell him
 I am his fortune's vassal and I send him
 The greatness he has got. I hourly learn
 A doctrine of obedience, and would gladly
 Look him i' the face.

PRO. This I'll report, dear lady.
 Have comfort, for I know your plight is pitied
 Of him that caused it.

GAL. You see how easily she may be surprised.

[Here Proculeius and two of the Guard ascend the monument by a ladder placed against a window, and, having descended, come behind Cleopatra. Some of the Guard unbar and open the gates.]

Guard her till Cæsar come.

[Exit.]

26 *dependency*] submissiveness.

27 *pray in aid*] The passage means that Cæsar himself will become a petitioner for Cleopatra's kindly consideration and co-operation in the proceedings that are to follow. "Pray in aid" is a legal term, used of those petitioning a court of justice to procure them help from interested parties, who are not themselves suitors to the court.

29-30 *I send him . . . has got*] I send him acknowledgment of the supremacy he has obtained over me.

35-36 *You see . . . Cæsar come*] The Folios continue this speech to "Proculeius." Malone following Plutarch's narrative transferred it to "Gallus" to whom alone it is appropriate.

35 (Stage Direction) *Here Proculeius . . . open the gates*] The Folios

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

IRAS. Royal queen !

CHAR. O Cleopatra ! thou art taken, queen !

CLEO. Quick, quick, good hands. [*Drawing a dagger.*]

PRO. Hold, worthy lady, hold :
[*Seizes and disarms her.*]

Do not yourself such wrong, who are in this 40
Relieved, but not betray'd.

CLEO. What, of death too,
That rids our dogs of languish ?

PRO. Cleopatra,
Do not abuse my master's bounty by
The undoing of yourself : let the world see
His nobleness well acted, which your death
Will never let come forth.

CLEO. Where art thou, death ?
Come hither, come ! come, come, and take a queen
Worth many babes and beggars !

PRO. O, temperance, lady !

CLEO. Sir, I will eat no meat, I'll not drink, sir ;
If idle talk will once be necessary, 50
I'll not sleep neither : this mortal house I'll ruin,

omit here all stage directions, which were supplied by Malone from Plutarch's description of the mode in which Proculeius and his companions enter the monument.

42 *languish*] lingering pain of disease, protraction of misery. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, I, ii, 48 : "One desperate grief cures with another's *languish*."

48 *Worth many babes . . . beggars!*] Worth hosts of babes and beggars who are death's common prey.

temperance] moderation ; "be moderate."

50-51 *If idle talk . . . sleep neither*] "once" seems to mean "at any time." Cleopatra will deny herself sleep, and to prevent sleep will keep herself awake to indulge in any amount of idle talk.

Do Cæsar what he can. Know, sir, that I
Will not wait pinion'd at your master's court,
Nor once be chastised with the sober eye
Of dull Octavia. Shall they hoist me up
And show me to the shouting varletry
Of censuring Rome? Rather a ditch in Egypt
Be gentle grave unto me! rather on Nilus' mud
Lay me stark naked, and let the water-flies
Blow me into abhorring! rather make
My country's high pyramides my gibbet,
And hang me up in chains!

60

PRO. You do extend
These thoughts of horror further than you shall
Find cause in Cæsar.

Enter DOLABELLA

DOL. Proculeius,
What thou hast done thy master Cæsar knows,
And he hath sent for thee: for the queen,
I'll take her to my guard.

PRO. So, Dolabella,
It shall content me best: be gentle to her.
[*To Cleo.*] To Cæsar I will speak what you shall please,
If you'll employ me to him.

54-55 *Nor once be chastised . . . dull Octavia*] Cf. IV, xv, 29, *supra*.

60 *Blow me into abhorring*] Flyblow me, putrefy me, into an object of
loathing.

61 *pyramides*] the correct plural of the Latin "pyramis," i. e., pyramid.

The modern form "pyramids" seems to have been unknown to the
Elizabethans.

70 *employ me*] send me with a commission.

CLEO.

Say, I would die.

[*Exeunt Proculeius and Soldiers.*]

DOL. Most noble empress, you have heard of me?

CLEO. I cannot tell.

DOL.

Assuredly you know me.

CLEO. No matter, sir, what I have heard or known.

You laugh when boys or women tell their dreams;

Is 't not your trick?

DOL.

I understand not, madam.

CLEO. I dream'd there was an emperor Antony:

O, such another sleep, that I might see

But such another man!

DOL.

If it might please ye, —

CLEO. His face was as the heavens; and therein stuck
A sun and moon, which kept their course and lighted 80
The little O, the earth.

DOL.

Most sovereign creature, —

CLEO. His legs bestrid the ocean: his rear'd arm
Crested the world: his voice was propertyed
As all the tuned spheres, and that to friends;
But when he meant to quail and shake the orb,
He was as rattling thunder. For his bounty,
There was no winter in 't; an autumn 't was

81 *The little O, the earth*] Thus Steevens following Theobald. The Folios read *The little o' th' earth, i. e.*, the small object of the earth. But "O" in the sense of circle or orb is very common.

83–84 *propertyed . . . spheres*] endowed with all the music of the spheres. 85 *quail*] make tremble.

87 *an autumn 't was*] Theobald's brilliant emendation of the Folio reading *An Anthony it was*. In manuscripts of the time *Autumn* might easily be misread *Antonie*. The objection that reaping the autumn crops does

That grew the more by reaping: his delights
Were dolphin-like; they show'd his back above
The element they lived in: in his livery
Walk'd crowns and crownets; realms and islands were
As plates dropp'd from his pocket.

90

DOL. Cleopatra, —

CLEO. Think you there was, or might be, such a man
As this I dream'd of?

DOL. Gentle madam, no.

CLEO. You lie, up to the hearing of the gods.
But if there be, or ever were, one such,
It's past the size of dreaming: nature wants stuff
To vie strange forms with fancy; yet to imagine
An Antony, were nature's piece 'gainst fancy,
Condemning shadows quite.

DOL. Hear me, good madam. 100

Your loss is as yourself, great; and you bear it
As answering to the weight: would I might never
O'ertake pursued success, but I do feel,

not in itself make them grow the more seems prosaic. Those who defend the reading *an Anthony* represent that Cleopatra finds in her lover's name a synonym for inexhaustible perfection and quote I, iii, 90, *supra*: "O, my oblivion is a very Antony."

92 *plates*] silver coins. Cf. Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, II, ii, 158: "he is worth three hundred *plates*."

97-100 *nature wants stuff . . . shadows quite*] nature lacks the material to compete with imagination in framing unwonted shapes; yet (after all) to imagine the existence of an Antony were to call into being a supreme triumph for nature, a masterpiece of nature's making which should outmatch any figment of fancy, condemning imaginary phantoms to complete insignificance.

103 *but I do feel*] if I do not feel.

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

By the rebound of yours, a grief that smites
My very heart at root.

CLEO. I thank you, sir.

Know you what Cæsar means to do with me?

DOL. I am loath to tell you what I would you knew.

CLEO. Nay, pray you, sir, —

DOL. Though he be honourable, —

CLEO. He'll lead me then in triumph?

DOL. Madam, he will; I know 't. 110

[*Flourish and shout within: "Make way there: Cæsar!"*]

*Enter CÆSAR, GALLUS, PROCULEIUS, MÆCENAS, SELEUCUS, and
others of his Train*

CÆS. Which is the Queen of Egypt?

DOL. It is the emperor, madam. [*Cleopatra kneels.*]

CÆS. Arise, you shall not kneel:

I pray you, rise; rise, Egypt.

CLEO. Sir, the gods

Will have it thus; my master and my lord

I must obey.

CÆS. Take to you no hard thoughts:

The record of what injuries you did us,

Though written in our flesh, we shall remember

As things but done by chance.

CLEO. Sole sir o' the world,

I cannot project mine own cause so well

120

To make it clear; but do confess I have

104 *smites*] Capell's correction of the Folio reading *suits*.

120 *project*] set forth or present. Elsewhere Shakespeare only uses the word as a noun.

Been laden with like frailties which before
Have often shamed our sex.

CÆS. Cleopatra, know,
We will extenuate rather than enforce:
If you apply yourself to our intents,
Which towards you are most gentle, you shall find
A benefit in this change; but if you seek
To lay on me a cruelty by taking
Antony's course, you shall bereave yourself
Of my good purposes and put your children 130
To that destruction which I'll guard them from
If thereon you rely. I'll take my leave.

CLEO. And may, through all the world: 't is yours;
and we,
Your scutcheons and your signs of conquest, shall
Hang in what place you please. Here, my good lord.

CÆS. You shall advise me in all for Cleopatra.

CLEO. This is the brief of money, plate and jewels,
I am possess'd of: 't is exactly valued,
Not petty things admitted. Where's Seleucus?

SEL. Here, madam. 140

CLEO. This is my treasurer: let him speak, my lord,
Upon his peril, that I have reserved
To myself nothing. Speak the truth, Seleucus.

124 *extenuate rather than enforce*] diminish or underrate rather than exaggerate. Cf. *Jul. Cæs.*, III, ii, 37-39: "his glory not *extenuated* . . . nor his offences *enforced*."

137 *brief*] schedule or inventory.

139 *Not petty things admitted*] Thus the Folios. Theobald read *omitted* for *admitted*. But in lines 165 *et seq.*, *infra*, Cleopatra distinctly says she has reserved "Immoment toys," etc.

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

SEL. Madam,
I had rather seal my lips than to my peril
Speak that which is not.

CLEO. What have I kept back?

SEL. Enough to purchase what you have made
known.

CÆS. Nay, blush not, Cleopatra; I approve
Your wisdom in the deed.

CLEO. See, Cæsar! O, behold,
How pomp is follow'd! mine will now be yours, 150
And, should we shift estates, yours would be mine.
The ingratitude of this Seleucus does
Even make me wild. O slave, of no more trust
Than love that's hired! What, goest thou back? thou
shalt

Go back, I warrant thee; but I'll catch thine eyes,
Though they had wings: slave, soulless villain, dog!
O rarely base!

CÆS. Good queen, let us entreat you.

CLEO. O Cæsar, what a wounding shame is this,
That thou vouchsafing here to visit me,
Doing the honour of thy lordliness 160
To one so meek, that mine own servant should
Parcel the sum of my disgraces by
Addition of his envy! Say, good Cæsar,

145 *seal*] Thus the Third and Fourth Folios. The First and Second Folios read *seele*, i. e., "sew up," for which cf. III, xiii, 112, *supra*.

154 *What, goest thou back?*] What, do you retreat, run away?

162-163 *Parcel the sum . . . envy*] Fill out the items of my disgraces by adding charges invented by his malice.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT V

That I some lady trifles have reserved,
 Immoment toys, things of such dignity
 As we greet modern friends withal; and say,
 Some nobler token I have kept apart
 For Livia and Octavia, to induce
 Their mediation; must I be unfolded
 With one that I have bred? The gods! it smites me 170
 Beneath the fall I have. [*To Seleucus*] Prithee, go hence;
 Or I shall show the cinders of my spirits
 Through the ashes of my chance: wert thou a man,
 Thou wouldst have mercy on me.

CÆS.

Forbear, Seleucus.

[*Exit Seleucus.*]

CLEO. Be it known, that we, the greatest, are mis-
 thought

For things that others do, and when we fall
 We answer others' merits in our name,
 Are therefore to be pitied.

CÆS.

Cleopatra,

Not what you have reserved, nor what acknowledged,

165 *Immoment*] Trifling, insignificant.

166 *modern*] ordinary, every-day.

168 *Livia*] Livia Drusilla, the wife of Cæsar.

169-170 *unfolded With*] exposed by.

171 *Beneath the fall I have*] Lower than the degradation I have already
 experienced.

172-173 *I shall show . . . chance*] I shall make the embers of my spirited
 nature glow again through the ashes of my decayed fortune. For this
 usage of "chance" cf. III, x, 36: "The wounded *chance* of Antony."

174 *Forbear*] Withdraw.

175 *misthought*] misjudged.

177 *We answer . . . name*] We are obliged to answer in our own name
 for that for which others rightly merit the responsibility.

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Put we i' the roll of conquest: still be 't yours, 180
 Bestow it at your pleasure, and believe
 Cæsar's no merchant, to make prize with you
 Of things that merchants sold. Therefore be cheer'd;
 Make not your thoughts your prisons: no, dear queen;
 For we intend so to dispose you as
 Yourself shall give us counsel. Feed, and sleep:
 Our care and pity is so much upon you
 That we remain your friend; and so, adieu.

CLEO. My master, and my lord!

CÆS. Not so. Adieu.

[*Flourish. Exeunt Cæsar and his train.*]

CLEO. He words me, girls, he words me, that I should
 not 190

Be noble to myself: but, hark thee, Charmian.

[*Whispers Charmian.*]

IRAS. Finish, good lady; the bright day is done,
 And we are for the dark.

CLEO. Hie thee again:
 I have spoke already, and it is provided;
 Go put it to the haste.

CHAR. Madam, I will.

Re-enter DOLABELLA

DOL. Where is the queen?

CHAR. Behold, sir. [*Exit.*]

CLEO. Dolabella!

DOL. Madam, as thereto sworn by your command,

184 *Make not . . . prisons*] Be not a prisoner in imagination.

194 *it is provided*] Cleopatra means that she has made arrangements for obtaining the means of suicide.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT V

CLEO. Let him come in. [Exit Guardsman.

What poor an instrument

May do a noble deed! he brings me liberty.
My resolution's placed, and I have nothing
Of woman in me: now from head to foot
I am marble-constant; now the fleeting moon
No planet is of mine.

Re-enter Guardsman, with Clown bringing in a basket

GUARD. This is the man.

240

CLEO. Avoid, and leave him. [Exit Guardsman.

Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there,
That kills and pains not?

CLOWN. Truly, I have him: but I would not be the
party that should desire you to touch him, for his biting
is immortal; those that do die of it do seldom or never
recover.

CLEO. Rememberest thou any that have died on't? 248

CLOWN. Very many, men and women too. I heard of
one of them no longer than yesterday: a very honest
woman, but something given to lie; as a woman should
not do, but in the way of honesty: how she died of the
biting of it, what pain she felt: truly, she makes a very

235 *What poor*] How poor.

239 *the fleeting moon*] the inconstant, changeable moon. Cf. IV, xv, 11,
supra.

241 *Aspid*] Retire.

242 *worm*] asp or small venomous serpent which Cleopatra calls "aspic"
at line 291, *infra*.

245 *party*] person.

246 *immortal*] blunder for "mortal," deadly.

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

good report o' the worm; but he that will believe all that they say, shall never be saved by half that they do: but this is most fallible, the worm's an odd worm.

CLEO. Get thee hence; farewell.

CLOWN. I wish you all joy of the worm.

[Setting down his basket.]

CLEO. Farewell.

CLOWN. You must think this, look you, that the worm will do his kind.

261

CLEO. Ay, ay; farewell.

CLOWN. Look you, the worm is not to be trusted but in the keeping of wise people, for indeed there is no goodness in the worm.

CLEO. Take thou no care; it shall be heeded.

CLOWN. Very good. Give it nothing, I pray you, for it is not worth the feeding.

CLEO. Will it eat me?

269

CLOWN. You must not think I am so simple but I know the devil himself will not eat a woman: I know that a woman is a dish for the gods, if the devil dress her not. But, truly, these same whoreson devils do the gods great harm in their women; for in every ten that they make, the devils mar five.

CLEO. Well, get thee gone; farewell.

CLOWN. Yes, forsooth: I wish you joy o' the worm.

[Exit.]

Re-enter IRAS with a robe, crown, &c.

CLEO. Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have Immortal longings in me: now no more

256 *[fallible]* blunder for "infallible," i. e., certain.

261 *do his kind]* act according to his nature.

The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip: 280
 Yare, yare, good Iras; quick. Methinks I hear
 Antony call; I see him rouse himself
 To praise my noble act; I hear him mock
 The luck of Cæsar, which the gods give men
 To excuse their after wrath. Husband, I come:
 Now to that name my courage prove my title!
 I am fire and air; my other elements
 I give to baser life. So; have you done?
 Come then and take the last warmth of my lips.
 Farewell, kind Charmian; Iras, long farewell. 290

[*Kisses them. Iras falls and dies.*]

Have I the aspic in my lips? Dost fall?
 If thou and nature can so gently part,
 The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,
 Which hurts, and is desired. Dost thou lie still?
 If thus thou vanishest, thou tell'st the world
 It is not worth leave-taking.

CHAR. Dissolve, thick cloud, and rain, that I may
 say
 The gods themselves do weep!

281 *Yare, yare*] Be quick. Cf. III, vii, 38, and III, xiii, 131, *supra*.

287-288 *I am fire and air . . . to baser life*] It was the old doctrine of natural philosophy that man was composed of the four elements, air, fire, earth, and water. Cf. *Hen. V*, III, vii, 21-22: "he is pure *air and fire*; and the dull *elements* of earth and water never appear in him."

290 *Iras, long farewell*] Iras would seem to die of shock and grief. There is no indication in the text, as many editors infer, that Iras has applied an asp to her own arm.

291 *aspic*] asp. This form which is found in North's translation of Plutarch is rare. Cf. line 348, *infra*.

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

CLEO. This proves me base:
 If she first meet the curled Antony,
 He'll make demand of her, and spend that kiss 300
 Which is my heaven to have. Come, thou mortal
 wretch,

[*To an asp, which she applies to her breast.*]

With thy sharp teeth this knot intricate
 Of life at once untie: poor venomous fool,
 Be angry, and dispatch. O, couldst thou speak,
 That I might hear thee call great Cæsar ass
 Unpolicied!

CHAR. O eastern star!

CLEO. Peace, peace!
 Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
 That sucks the nurse asleep?

CHAR. O, break! O, break!

CLEO. As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle, —
 O Antony! — Nay, I will take thee too: 310

[*Applying another asp to her arm.*]

What should I stay — [Dies.]

299 *curled*] well kempt. Cf. II, ii, 228: "Being barber'd ten times o'er."

302 *intricate*] tightly drawn. The word seems compounded of "intrinsic" and "intricate." See *Lear*, II, ii, 70: "intrinsic," which is used in the same sense. Marston in his *Scourge of Villainy* (*Works*, ed. Bullen, III, p. 305) speaks with scorn of such "new-minted epithets (as real, *intrinsicate*, Delphic)."

303 *fool*] a term of half contemptuous endearment, applied to animals as well as to human beings.

305-306 *ass Unpolicied*] an ass incapable of carrying out the policy which he had mapped out.

311 *What*] Why.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT V

CHAR. In this vile world? So, fare thee well.
 Now boast thee, death, in thy possession lies
 A lass unparallel'd. Downy windows, close;
 And golden Phœbus never be beheld
 Of eyes again so royal! Your crown's awry;
 I'll mend it, and then play.

Enter the Guard, rushing in

FIRST GUARD. Where is the queen?

CHAR. Speak softly, wake her not.

FIRST GUARD. Cæsar hath sent —

CHAR. Too slow a messenger.
[Applies an asp.]

O, come apace, dispatch: I partly feel thee. 320

FIRST GUARD. Approach, ho! All's not well:
 Cæsar's beguiled.

SEC. GUARD. There's Dolabella sent from Cæsar;
 call him.

FIRST GUARD. What work is here! Charmian, is
 this well done?

312 *vile*] Thus Capell. The Folios read *wilde* or *wild*. But *vile*, which
 gives the better and stronger sense, is always spelt in the Folios *vilde*,
 so that the misprint is very probable.

314 *Downy windows*] Eyelids with their soft down or hair. Cf. *Venus and*
Adonis, 482: "Her two blue *windows* faintly she up-heaveth."

316 *away*] Rowe's correction of the Folio reading *away*. In Daniel's
Tragedie of Cleopatra, 1594, mention is made that Cleopatra in falling
 down dead "*wryes* The Diademe which on her head she wore"
 and that Charmian "*hastes to right it*."

317 *and then play*] A reminiscence of Cleopatra's words (lines 230-231,
supra): "I'll give thee leave To *play* till doomsday."

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

CHAR. It is well done, and fitting for a princess
 Descended of so many royal kings.
 Ah, soldier! [Dies.]

Re-enter DOLABELLA

DOL. How goes it here?

SEC. GUARD. All dead.

DOL. Cæsar, thy thoughts
 Touch their effects in this: thyself art coming
 To see perform'd the dreaded act which thou
 So sought'st to hinder. 330
[Within. "A way there, a way for Cæsar!"]

Re-enter CÆSAR and his train

DOL. O sir, you are too sure an augurer;
 That you did fear is done.

CÆS. Bravest at the last,
 She levell'd at our purposes, and being royal
 Took her own way. The manner of their deaths?
 I do not see them bleed.

DOL. Who was last with them?

327-328 *thy thoughts . . . in this*] thy forebodings find their realization
 here.

333 *levell'd*] guessed.

333-334 *being royal . . . way*] A somewhat doubtful reference has been
 detected here to the custom, well recognised in the chase, of giving a
 hart, which had escaped the huntsmen when a king or queen was in
 the hunting-field, the liberty to roam at will and free from molestation
 for the rest of its life and to bear the title of "hart-royal." It is a
 like kind of "royal" license which Cleopatra is thought to be credited
 with exercising here.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA ACT V

FIRST GUARD. A simple countryman, that brought
her figs:

This was his basket.

CÆS. Poison'd then.

FIRST GUARD. O Cæsar,

This Charmian lived but now; she stood and spake:

I found her trimming up the diadem

On her dead mistress; tremblingly she stood, 340

And on the sudden dropp'd.

CÆS. O noble weakness!

If they had swallow'd poison, 't would appear

By external swelling: but she looks like sleep,

As she would catch another Antony

In her strong toil of grace.

DOL. Here, on her breast,

There is a vent of blood, and something blown:

The like is on her arm.

FIRST GUARD. This is an aspic's trail: and these
fig-leaves

Have slime upon them, such as the aspic leaves

Upon the caves of Nile.

CÆS.	Most probable
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
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11	11
12	12
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91	91
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94	94
95	95
96	96
97	97
98	98
99	99
100	100

That so she died; for her physician tells me

339 *trimming up the diadem*] Cf. Charmian's words, lines 316–317, *supra*:

"Your crown 's awry; I'll mend it."

346 *blown*] swollen or puffed.

348 *an asp's trail*] an asp's trail. Cf. line 291, *supra*.

350 *the caves of Nile*] Thus the Folios. *Caves* have been doubtfully explained as the underground caves by which the Nile water was brought to Alexandria. It is more reasonable to read *canes*, i. e., reeds.

SCENE II ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

She hath pursued conclusions infinite
Of easy ways to die. Take up her bed,
And bear her women from the monument:
She shall be buried by her Antony:
No grave upon the earth shall clip in it
A pair so famous. High events as these
Strike those that make them; and their story is
No less in pity than his glory which
Brought them to be lamented. Our army shall 360
In solemn show attend this funeral,
And then to Rome. Come, Dolabella, see
High order in this great solemnity. [Exeunt.]

352 *pursued conclusions*] tried experiments.

356 *clip*] embrace or enfold.

